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THE LONGER EPISTLES OF PAUL,

VIZ:

ROMANS, I CORINTHIANS, II CORINTHIANS.

BY

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“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.”—PAUL.

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P R E F A C E.

THESE *Longer Epistles* of Paul are treated in the same general method as the *Shorter*. The introduction to each will present the circumstances under which they were written, the objects had in view, and in general, all the points important to be held in mind for their aid toward a full understanding of these Epistles.

Should my life and health be spared my next volume will include the two books by Luke; his gospel history, and his history of the Acts of the Apostles.

HENRY COWLES.

OBERLIN, OHIO, MARCH, 1880.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Epistle of Paul, in every sense great, has always stood in the canon at the head of all the Epistles of Paul, and usually, of all which the canon embraced. This prior rank has been due, not to an earlier date; but in part to its length; more to its surpassing preeminence in the domain of theological doctrine and to its adaptation to a higher grade of mind and culture; but perhaps most of all, to the early metropolitan rank of the church at Rome. The latter point is a merely adventitious circumstance, adding nothing to the merit of the epistle, which however, had no need of adventitious aid to rank it first among the Epistles of the greatest human epistolary writer.

That Paul wrote this epistle has never been questioned.

It is sufficiently clear that he wrote it *at Corinth*. For he sends the salutations of Gaius his host, *i. e.* with whom he was then living (16 : 23), this Gaius being one of the very few whom Paul baptized in Corinth, his home (1 Cor. 1 : 14). Moreover it is currently assumed, and apparently with good reason, that Paul sent this epistle by the hand of Phebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenehrea which was a suburb of Corinth, in as much as he specially commends her to their christian confidence (16 : 1, 2). Erastus who held an office in the city where Paul wrote this epistle (Rom. 16 : 23) seems to have been at home in Corinth, (2 Tim. 4 : 20).

In regard to the *date* of this epistle, the internal evidence is not less decisive. It was finished as he was on the point of leaving Corinth to visit Jerusalem and bear with him a contribution recently made by the churches of Achaia (Greece) and of Macedonia, for the relief of the suffering saints there. (Rom. 15 : 25, 26). This collection among those churches for the poor at Jerusalem held a

large place in the loving heart and active hand of this great apostle, of which we see delightful traces in both of his epistles to Corinth (1 Cor. 16: 1, and 2 Cor. chapters 8 and 9.) Luke helps us to identify this journey to Jerusalem, as the last he made prior to his arrest and long detention as a prisoner, first at Cesarea and next at Rome. (Compare Acts 19: 21 and 20: 22 and especially 24: 17). Inasmuch as this journey was planned to bring him to Jerusalem by the Pentecost (early spring), and it was at that very time that his long confinement began, we must fix the date of the epistle during the first months of A. D. 58.

The *antecedent history* of this church at Rome should receive attention. It was not planted by Paul. Indeed at this writing he had not been there, but wrote to them that his manifold labors in preaching the gospel to Gentiles had much hindered him from coming to them, though he had "had these many years a great desire to go to them, (15: 22, 23), and hoped, when his then pending journey to Jerusalem should have been accomplished, that he might call upon them on his way to Spain (15: 24-29). But it often happens that the best men propose things one way and God disposes in another. So Paul's visit to Rome came about much otherwise than he was then planning.

At the time of Paul's writing, this church seems to have had some maturity of years, since it contained among its members, Paul's "well beloved Epenetus, the first fruits of Aehaia unto Christ"; also Andronicus and Junia, "his kinsman," who, he remarks, "were in Christ before me." But it is not safe to assume that these members had lived all their lives, or even all the christian portion, at Rome. The Jewish population there had been specially fluctuating. The Emperor Clandius (reigned A.D. 41 to 54) had once expelled all Jews from Rome (Acts 18: 2); yet Jews were soon there again. If, as some suppose, the disturbances which were the alleged ground of this expulsion had their origin in controversies over Christianity, it would seem to follow that christianity was there quite early.

As to the original planting of that church, some seed may have fallen there from that broad-cast sowing at the great Pentecost, when among others from the civilized world at that age were "strangers from Rome," *i. e.* persons sojourning there, of whom some were Jews and others

proselytes. (Acts 2 : 10). The details of its early history however are on no known record.

It is one of the incidents of civilization that a great metropolitan city must have to a certain extent a changeable population. Under this law it came to pass that Paul had become personally acquainted elsewhere with a very considerable group of their church members. In his closing chapter (16:) he sent his personal salutations to twenty-seven by name, besides sundry others included under general descriptions. Noticeably his old friends, Priscilla and Aquila, are there (16: 3,4) whom we met first at Corinth (Acts 18: 2) then but recently driven out from Rome ; who appear not long after at Ephesus (Acts 18: 26) ; who were back from their Ephesian residence to Rome again at the date of this epistle ; but are saluted again and last of all at Ephesus, in Paul's latest epistle (2 Tim. 4: 19). To trace the local homes of this well known family will give us some conception of the changes of residence which the exigencies of business forced upon families engaged in a small way in manufacture and commerce. To the honor of this family be it said that frequent as their removals were, they took their Christianity with them, everywhere faithful to Christ and full of service to his cause.

Such were some of the materials of the church in this metropolitan city. Paul's personal acquaintance with them had been commenced elsewhere than in Rome. Beyond this personal knowledge of certain individuals of that church Paul knew the rest only as he knew their general characteristics. The Jewish portion—apparently the largest element—he knew very thoroughly because he knew himself. His own early Pharisaic life, beliefs, ideas, lay too deep in his experience to be ever forgotten. Remarkably it is true that the great theological discussions in this letter hinge upon the Pharisaic system. Their notions of law, of righteousness, of the grounds of acceptance before God, gave occasion to the great theological argument of this epistle. To such an extent is this the case that it may be truly said in one word that *the key to the just interpretation of the epistle lies in the Pharisee.* To comprehend the Pharisee of that age is to hold the key to the significance, the objects, the bearings, of this most argumentative epistle. To this, therefore, we shall have occasion to refer often in our detailed examination of his argument.

It conduced, probably to the method and perfection of this argument that Paul's mind was diverted but little if at all from his great theme by any personal matters existing in that church. That is, he was in a condition to write an essay upon the relations of *Pharisaism to Christianity*, with no local matters to disturb the pure and simple logic of his thought. Such local matters might have been sprung upon him if he had lived, though but temporarily, among them. Fortunately for the unity, the compactness, the perfect logic of this treatise, he had full and undistracted scope for his discussion.

Another feature of this epistle will arrest every thoughtful reader ;—viz. that Paul adapted the intellectual tone of his discussion to a grade of mind quite above the average. He wrote as if he had in his eye readers of more than ordinary culture, capable, therefore, of comprehending profound investigation and sound, thorough logic. Possibly if he had lived at Rome awhile in personal contact with that church, the world would have missed the lofty intellectual tone of this discussion, for his ideal Roman church may have been quite above the actual, and a sensible writer could do no otherwise than adjust himself to his ideal. Paul seems to have thought of Rome as the brain-centre of the civilized world of that age,—the place whither highest culture and acutest thought had been attracted ; and he therefore wrote accordingly. Fortunately it is of no consequence to us whether his actual Roman readers were or were not below his ideal. The result lives, and has come down along the ages to task the best, the clearest and the most logical thought in all subsequent generations—a storehouse of theological truth—its elements elaborated profoundly, discussed thoroughly, wrought into system as by a master's hand.

The question has been often asked whether Paul's ideal readers were mainly Jew or Gentile. The truth seems to be that while the Gentile is here, he is here only in his heathenism ; in its moral guilt because of his violation of the law of reason and conscience, and in its unspeakable vices. The Gentile is not here with any religious or theological system. But the Jew is. The Jew is here as the somewhat cultured and certainly well developed Pharisee. He has his religious system, clear-cut, well put together, definite enough in its doctrines, albeit fearfully pernicious

because ministering so mightily to pride and self-righteousness, and because so thoroughly hostile to the gospel scheme.

It results, therefore, that the great theological discussion in this epistle contemplates, not Gentile readers but Jewish—the real Pharisee. We cannot hold this fact in mind too prominently as we canvass Paul's great argument.

Any truth is seen most clearly when put in clear, sharp contrast with its antithetic error. This law of intellectual light comes into play admirably in the logical portion of this epistle. For here, the Christian system stands in precisely this clear, sharp contrast with the great errors of the Pharisaic system. The religious system of the Pharisee was—*Salvation by works of personal righteousness*;—indeed a complete salvation by these works alone; a salvation which brought him justification before God, and also salvation from sin itself. That is, he found in his system (as he most erroneously supposed) both justification and sanctification.

It devolved therefore upon Paul to show (1). That he did not and could not find either the one or the other, in his works of righteousness; and (2.) That these supreme moral blessings are found in Christ alone. Thus the one system, put in strong contrast with the other, brings out the sunlight of gospel truth in its full orb'd glory.

Of the chapters treating of practical duties (12–16), no special analysis is called for here. In Paul's thought, all truth is in order to goodness. The glorious gospel of the blessed God is ever made to converge to its focus upon a holy, blameless, loving Christian life. The supreme glory of gospel truth is not that its polished stones adjust themselves into a glorious but abstract temple, at once beautiful and magnificent; but rather that it takes the coarse, hard, rough stones out of their earthly quarry, chips them into form, polishes them into beauty, and then builds them into God's living and everlasting temple to the glory of his name forever.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER I.

The introduction alludes to the foregoing prophecies (1, 2); refers centrally to Jesus as in the line of David on his human side, but on his divine, proved to be the Son of God by his resurrection (3, 4); from him Paul had his commission to bring all nations to the faith of Christ (5); under which gospel they had been called in (6). The address with invocation of blessings (7); thanks God for their widely known faith (8); testifies to his prayers in their behalf and particularly that he might yet visit them (9, 10) and for what purpose (11, 12); would gladly have come before to bring them the gospel (13–15); why not ashamed of the gospel (16); because it reveals the righteousness of God (17); a matter most vital because God has made known his wrath against all the sin of knowing yet not obeying God (18, 19); how this applies to men under the light of nature (20, 21); the process of their degeneracy into idol worship (22, 23); abandoned morally of God, and why (24, 25); to sink down into basest lusts (26, 27); reprobated of God and why and unto what results (28–32).

1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
2. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures,)
3. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;
4. And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Seeking no higher honor than to be servant of Christ Jesus; called to become an apostle; set apart by act of

God to preach his gospel,—he fitly, in addressing Jewish readers, refers to the predictions of this gospel and of the promised Saviour by their prophets in the holy Scriptures. In respect to this Son of God, the vital facts are twofold ; (1) That on the human side, as to his human nature, [flesh] he was in the line of David ; (2) That on his divine side, he had been defined, and by his resurrection, mightily proven to be the Son of God as to his holy spiritual nature. “The spirit of holiness” stands over against “the flesh,” the relation of each clause being indicated by the same Greek proposition (“according to”). Consequently it must be spoken of his divine as contrasted with his human nature. That the decisive, resistless proof of his being the recognized Son of God came to man in and through his resurrection, is every where the doctrine of the Scriptures, (1 Cor. 15: 14; Heb. 1: 3:—Acts 5: 31 etc.

5. By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name :

6. Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ :

7. To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints : Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Grace and apostleship” two ideas and not merely one, *i.e.* not merely the grace or favor of becoming an apostle ; but separately : (a) “Grace” in the sense of that divine mercy which found him mad and lost in sin, yet brought him to repentance and then forgave him most freely : next (b) The exalted privilege of being an apostle, to bring the nations (Gentiles) to accept the faith of the gospel obediently to the glory of his name.

Among these saved ones out of the nations are ye, the called of Jesus Christ. Ye too as well as I have occasion to recognize the mercy that has called you as coming through Christ.

In addressing the saints in Rome he reminds them that they are beloved of God and called as saints—*i.e.* called to live the life of holy men, worthily of their high calling. Upon them all, he invokes “grace” in the sense of all

spiritual blessings ; and “ peace,” significant of its fruits unto their blessedness.

8. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers :

10. Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

First of all he thanks God that the saints at Rome, that great metropolis of the nations, are so nobly meeting their high responsibilities and improving their grand opportunities of sounding forth their gospel influence to the ends of the civilized world. All abroad their faith in Jesus had become known. He has the more joy in this because he sees in their wide christian influence an answer to his own prayers. It is pleasant to him to recall those prayers. We hear him say ; God knows how unceasingly I have brought your case with distinct mention before his throne. Paul's words mean precisely this—*how* unceasingly I have mentioned you ; rather than “ that ” I have. Particularly, he had been praying that he might be prospered yet to visit them. Prosperous journeys as he thought of them, came of God's gracious will and kindly guiding and prospering hand.

11. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established :

12. That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Under this longing desire, first in thought, lay the imparting of some spiritual gift—some of the many and various charismata, special endowments from the Holy Ghost, conferred by the apostles with prayer and imposition of hands. He would rejoice to impart these ; but his second thought was that spiritual blessings flow mutually and reciprocally, in a process of delightful giving and receiving, so that he might hope to receive as well as to give. Their

faith might help him, as his might strengthen them ; at least, this in his view is the best way to put the case, for it might be slightly unpleasant to them to think of Paul as assuming to be so high above them as to be only the giver and not in any wise a receiver as well. Thus Paul evinces not only a sweet christian humility, but a large measure of that good sense and quick perception of human nature which belong to really great minds.

13. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians ; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

It might seem to them strange that Paul had never yet come to Rome ; that knowing so well the supreme importance of that city as a strategic point for his gospel work ; that devoting himself for years to the conquest of the great commercial and populous cities of the age, he should thus far have left Rome out. Therefore he would have them understand that this omission came from no lack of appreciation of their city, from no pique against the dear saints there, from no lack of love for them personally, and no lack of purpose and plan to go ; but that over and over his efforts had been thwarted. His broad obligation to preach the gospel to the whole Gentile world distinctly embraced the population of great Rome. Most gladly would he leap forward to fulfil it.

16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Especially he would say with strongest emphasis that his omission to visit them was by no means because he was ashamed of this gospel. Rome he knew was a proud city ; and the name of the crucified Nazarene of Galilee could not be popular and welcome there. Unmeasured reproach would naturally befall him were he to lift up that cross and

narie as his banner before the aristocracy and wealth and culture of that great city ;—but never the first sense of shame should tinge his cheek or touch his sensibilities. Rather this gospel should be his highest glory, for in it there lay embodied and embosomed the glorious power of God unto the salvation of men, whether Jew or Gentile. Grandly does Paul assume that among all the interests and goods of earth there is nothing to be compared with the soul's salvation—the real saving of men from sin and bringing them into the purity of truth and the unselfishness of love ;—into the blessed sympathies of heart-communion with the Infinite God. So that no work can be worthier and no labor more sublime than to be accumulating and wielding those forces which bring men out of their moral darkness into God's glorious light,—lifting their lost souls out of moral ruin into God's great salvation. Therefore it is that he glories in the gospel of Christ, for God works in it and through it with his effective power toward and unto this salvation.

On this passage the reader's attention should be called particularly to the three following points : (1.) That in and with this gospel there goes a power of God working unto the salvation of men,—a power which is here and not elsewhere, which is so thoroughly involved in this gospel that Paul declares the gospel itself to be *that power*. This is a truth of surpassing interest and value. (2.) That this power avails not to the salvation of all men, but only, of "*every man that believeth*." Paul might have left out this limitation if the truth in the case would have borne the omission, and doubtless he would. But this limitation is a prime condition of the gospel as he held and taught it—salvation, not to all men but only to "*every one that believeth*." Paul knew very well that gospel truth, like all other truth, must be *believed* before it can have moral force on human souls. He will have some things to say soon about truth "*held in unrighteousness*"—held indeed, but held *down* and held back so that its moral power on the soul is worse than merely paralyzed. (3.) This is the first pivotal text of the epistle ; propounds the first cardinal truth in the goodly system which this epistle will present and discuss.

17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed

from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

This is the second pivotal passage of the epistle, holding in its nut-shell form the grand truth of justification by faith as opposed to the Pharisaic scheme of justification by works of law. This passage, being thoroughly vital to the whole epistle and withal somewhat difficult by reason of its conciseness, should be carefully expounded.

I understand Paul to say that in this gospel God has revealed to men his mode of justifying sinners; *viz. by and through their faith in Jesus Christ.* This he expresses tersely in the words—“from faith to faith”—in the sense that it proceeds or comes *from faith*; and enures to the salvation of all *men of faith*—all true believers. This justification turns on faith as its condition; it requires faith and never can fail of being given to all who truly believe.

The *make-up* and shaping of this pregnant phrase—“*from faith to faith*”—seems to have sacrificed somewhat of clearness for the sake of brevity. Perhaps we may say, Paul sought a formula which should embody the grand central truth of the gospel system in the fewest possible words, making a phrase which might live in the memory, easily remembered; never forgotten.

That we must take the words “to faith,” not in their abstract sense, *i. e.* to faith considered as a mental state or act, but in their concrete sense, *i. e.* to the *men of faith*, those who truly believe, is sufficiently clear from his proof text out of Hab. 2. 4; where “the just” are certainly men in the concrete; just, good men, who have life before God through and by their faith.*

It is certain therefore that Paul was thinking of faith in Christ as enuring to the salvation of the *men of faith*, real believers.

To go back for the moment to the standard phrase—“the righteousness of God” we cannot take it in the sense of God’s attribute of justice, abstractly considered; for the following reasons; (1.) The word for that idea should have been *dikaioma* (as in v. 32 below) and not as here

* This seems to be the precise shade of meaning in the Greek words which Paul uses; for if he had meant precisely, the men justified by faith shall live, the participle *dikaiomenos* rather than the adjective *dikaios* should have been his word.

dikaiosune.—(2.) The sense—abstract justice—does not correspond to the facts of the case ; for it was *not* the particular mission of the gospel scheme to reveal the abstract justice of God, but rather his great mercy.—(3.) The gospel did purposely and most wonderfully reveal God's scheme for making sinful men righteous and accepted as such before him. It reveals the great central fact that such justification comes through faith and avails unto all men of faith.—(4.) Finally, this exposition of the phrase—“the righteousness of God”—is fully sustained by Paul's subsequent use and explanation of it. (e. g. 3 : 21–26). Especially v. 21, 22. “But now the righteousness of God without law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.”—This mode of justifying sinners is called *God's mode*—God's righteousness—for the good reason that it originated with God, not with man ; is provided by God, not by man ; emanating from God's wisdom and from his great love, and not from any, even the least, merit on the part of man.

In further defining this righteousness of God as being God's mode of making believers righteous before him, it cannot be amiss to anticipate here, what Paul will bring out very distinctly further on, and say that it includes more than mere forgiveness of their sins, more than merely showing or declaring them to be accepted as righteous. The additional element—one of extremely vital value—is that of converting men from wickedness unto intrinsic righteousness of heart and life. God does not declare and show them to be righteous until they are radically and fundamentally transformed unto righteousness. Regeneration and repentance are thoroughly involved in this system as preliminary conditions, without which there can be no gospel justification. In chapter 6–8, Paul will elaborate these elements of the gospel scheme very thoroughly, as we shall see.

18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

It is entirely obvious that v. 18 is closely correlated to v. 17, using the same staple words. “The righteousness

of God is revealed"—opens v. 17; "the wrath of God is revealed" leads the thought in this v. 18. But noticeably, the former—God's mode of making men righteous—is said to be revealed *in the gospel* ("therein"); but the wrath of God is not said to be revealed particularly in this gospel. Rather, Paul says—This is revealed "*from heaven*." He does not arrest his course of thought to describe to us the various or the special modes in which God makes this revelation, although some of its manifestations are referred to below (vs. 25, 26, 28), which speak of God's righteously giving men up to self-reprobation so that their sin works out its natural results of more and more deep depravity, debasement and crime.

But let the reader be careful to note that the gospel scheme does and forever must assume God's deep, eternal displeasure against sin. Jesus came, not to call righteous men but sinners, to repentance. God's wrath is no causeless passion; no selfish irritation; no effervescence of hate. It is only the deep abhorrence of a holy soul against wrong; the irrepressible displeasure which infinite benevolence must feel toward all ungodliness and unrighteousness. Because God's character is so positively and intensely good, it is simply a necessity of his moral nature that he should dislike, loathe, condemn, all that is ungodly, unlike his own loving spirit; all that is unrighteous; that is to say, which recklessly tramples on the rights of others equally valuable as its own.

To misconstrue and pervert what the scriptures say of God's "wrath against sin" is unpardonably abusive to God and fearfully perilous to the souls of men. Hence these few words of explanation are in place for the double purpose of truth and light to those who will receive it, and of solemn warning to those who despise it.

Those men of ungodliness against whom God's wrath is revealed from heaven are further described here as "*holding the truth in unrighteousness*." In closely defining this phrase we must choose between two somewhat different senses of the verb, "hold;"—(a.) Holding and continuing to hold the truth, yet in and with the practice of unrighteousness; *i. e.* living still in sin, despite of their knowledge of God's truth: Or (b.) Holding *down*, suppressing the truth, by resisting its claims because of their unrighteousness.

The latter is to be preferred as most surely the real sense of Paul's word—(1) Because this verb means, not merely holding but holding *down*.*

But (2) and especially, because the entire drift of the subsequent context goes to develop this very process of holding *down* the truth, resisting its demands;—“changing the truth of God into a lie;” not “glorifying God as God and not being thankful;” not “loving to retain God in their knowledge.” Hence it becomes very certain that Paul did not think of wicked men as continuing to hold the truth of God in the midst of their sinning, but rather, as suppressing, perverting, and changing it to a lie, and thus almost utterly paralyzing its legitimate moral power upon their heart. This will appear very clearly as we proceed.

19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

In v. 18. Paul had assumed that wicked men have some real knowledge of God which in their wickedness they pervert and suppress. This being a thoroughly vital point, he here confirms that assumption.

His language is very expressive, but not easily translated into fully equivalent English words. It may be put thus: Because the knowable character of God—that in God which is knowable to mortals—is plain to them, for God has made it plain. This means that certain of the great and most vital elements in God's being and character are made plain to men by God's purposed revelation of himself. Paul proceeds to explain what man does know of God and how he abuses this knowledge and totally withstands the influence it should legitimately have upon his soul.

20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

In brief paraphrase—thus: For ever since the creation of the world, God's invisible attributes are distinctly seen,

* πατεχω

being apprehended by the human mind in his created works—these invisible attributes being his eternal power and Deity. This pregnant sentence, most compactly, tersely put, holds that God's otherwise invisible attributes have become in a sense visible to men ever since his creation of visible matter before their eyes ;—indeed, have become very distinctly visible, being mentally apprehended under the normal action of the human intelligence (“*nous*”) in and by means of God's created works. Then Paul is careful to say that those invisible attributes of which he speaks are precisely God's eternal power and his Godhead, his real Deity. Beyond all question, God's works of creation manifest his boundless power and his truly divine attributes. None but a God can create at all, giving existence where no existence was before ; and yet more, none but a God could create worlds of such vastness, majesty, beauty, glory. So that, if men do not see God in these great works of his it must be because they will not. Not to see God in these works is inexcusable guilt—as Paul proceeds to show.

On the sense of the word “*from*” in the clause—“*from* the creation of the world”—whether it be temporal [ever since *in time*], or logical [“*from*” as the source and fountain of knowledge], it would seem that both are involved, the temporal sense primarily, and then, as a consequence, the logical ; that is, ever since the creation, those visible works have been an open manifestation of God's eternal power and Deity, in which, whoever would, might apprehend by his intelligence those great qualities of the Infinite Maker.

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

“*When they knew God*” is neither quite literal, nor exact. The reader should be careful not to put emphasis on the word “when,” as if what Paul says would apply only in the special case in which men might chance to know God. What Paul said was this ; Because that, knowing God, they did not give him the glory due to him as God. Paul certainly assumes that men do know God ;

and also, that, under the light of this knowledge,—in the real possession of it, and despite of its legitimate power upon their souls, they yet withhold from God the glory which they know to be rightly his due. This is his first terrible indictment of guilt against wicked men.

“*Neither were thankful*”—assumes that they know God as their benefactor, and therefore as having a rightful claim upon their heart for thanksgiving. Noticeably Paul had said this repeatedly before in preaching the true God to heathen idolaters; *i. e.* At Lystra (Acts 14: 11–18);—“We preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities [idols] unto the living God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are therein; who has thus left not himself without witness *in that he did good*, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness:”—and similarly on Mars Hill (Acts 17: 23–29); “God who made the world and all things that are therein, seeing He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things; . . . for in him we live and move and have our being.”—Thus Paul held that even with no other light than that of nature, men might know enough of God to command their reverent worship and their gratitude for blessings ever coming from his hand. But instead of rendering to God their reverent worship and honest gratitude, they became vain in their imaginings and their foolish heart (void of understanding) became darkened. This is Paul’s account—his philosophy, we may call it—of the process by which men become heathen-idolaters. It was not because God had failed to make a sufficient revelation of himself to save them from this great folly and guilt; it was not because by some great misfortune, very excusable on their part, they had gravitated downward into the worship of what they foolishly conceived to be the good powers that brought them blessings; but it was because they stultified their reason, debased both their intellectual and their moral nature and so sunk themselves into folly, darkness and crime. In this description Paul uses words which he found in the Old Testament, in those expositions which the prophets gave of the same thing, *viz.* the degeneration of the human mind from the light of nature and reason into the darkness of idolatry.

To understand Paul, we cannot do better than to go back, as he did, to their account of this matter. Three specimen passages will suffice. We take Ps. 115: 2-8; Isa. 44: 9-20 and Jer. 10: 2-16.

To set forth the blended folly and guilt of idol-worship, the Psalmist says their “idols are not like our God who is in the heavens and who hath done all He pleased to do—but are only silver and gold, the work of men’s hands ; with mouths that speak not ; eyes that see not, ears that hear not ; noses that smell not”—most utterly powerless and senseless ; and adds—“They that make them are like unto them,” equally void of sense and wisdom ; “and so is every one that trusteth in them.” Idol-makers and worshippers have sunk to the lowest depths of fatuity and mental darkness. Isaiah shows us the smith tugging at his bellows, blowing up his coals, forging with his hammer, tasking the strength of his arm, till faint for food and wearied with toil, yet getting no help from the gods he is so laboriously manufacturing ; or, for a wooden god he grows his tree ; takes part of it for fuel to warm himself, a part for cooking his dinner ; another part he works into a god, falls down before it and worships, crying, “Deliver me, for thou art my god !”—but alas, he has not sense enough to say—How is this that part of my tree goes for fuel to warm me ; part to cook my dinner,—and shall I make the residue an abomination and fall down in worship before the stock of a tree ! “He feedeth” (says Isaiah) “on ashes ; a deceived heart hath turned him aside that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say—Is there not a lie in my right hand ?” This is the way Isaiah illustrates and verifies the words of Paul ;—“Became vain in their imaginings, and their senseless heart was darkened.”

With somewhat less of keen biting sarcasm, but not any less of solemn earnestness and scorching rebuke, Jeremiah declares “the customs of the heathen to be *vain* ;” shows how they cut their tree from the forest ; deck it with silver and gold ; fasten it with nails and hammer that it move not ; upright as the palm tree but it speaks not ; needing to be borne because it cannot go. “Be not afraid of them” (such gods as they !) “for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good. They are utterly brutish and foolish ; they are vanity and the work of errors.” Such was their view of that strange,

almost incredible infatuation under which men sunk into idolatry.

22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23. And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

As if all unconscious that they were sinking into fatuity, still proud of their wisdom as ever and only the more infatuated under their self-conceit, they substituted for the glory of the incorruptible God, an image modeled after perishable man, or even after beasts, birds, quadrupeds, reptiles ! So utterly could they pervert all just conceptions of God and supplant them with notions altogether base. Of course Paul speaks, not of any real change wrought in God, but only of the change produced in their ideal conceptions of him. From their ideal of God, they expelled all that is noble, pure, sublime, glorious, and put there instead, elements most revoltingly base and vile. They did this because they could and because they had a motive for expelling from their mind the true conception of a holy and righteous God.

24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

From this point onward to the end of the chapter, Paul shows how God abandoned idol-worshipping men to their lusts and gave them up to the fearful sway of their miserable infatuation. Three times he asserts this appalling fact in God's moral administration, returning to it again and again and expanding with more and more detail,—how, abandoned of God, they sank morally, not only into the infatuation of folly but into the lowest baseness of vice and crime. (v. 26, 28.) First, God gave them up, according to the lust of their heart, unto uncleanness—to the dishonoring of their own bodies among themselves. Under the sovereign sway of lust, what depth of debasement is too

low for man to reach though he be made in the rational image of God !

In the beginning of v. 25, the first Greek word, translated “who,” is somewhat more than the mere relative. Paul would describe the men of v. 24 a little further—as being men who could change the true God into a lie—the truth concerning God, into a totally false conception of him. It was but fitting that God should give them up to uncleanness, inasmuch as they were capable of so perverting the true idea of God. *They being such men that they could,* is the sense of Paul’s word.

They could not only pervert all true ideas of God into falsehood, but they actually worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator—rather, instead of—to the utter exclusion of all real worship of the Creator who is blessed forever !

26. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.

27. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

These verses reiterate and expand the point put in v. 24, showing that the innate modesty and purity of woman are prostituted, and how men also debase themselves to the depths of shame to reap the ruin which waits evermore upon abuses of nature.

It is one of the sternest indictments against the cultured heathenism of ancient Greece and Rome that men high in literary merit and peerless in poetry, could speak of these debasing vices without a blush—with never a word of condemnation or even disapproval !

28. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malicionsness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30. Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31. Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful :

Returning to the same great fact—the rationale of heathenism, with its moral darkness, debasement and crime, Paul makes the pivotal point in its moral aspect yet more clear than before. It was because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. They sought to rid themselves of every true conception of God. They labored for that full license to sin which the human mind can reach only as it expels God from its thought. Paul's carefully chosen words are—“ Because they did not *approve* of holding God in their knowledge, God abandoned them to a *disapproved* mind—a mind morally tried with the presence of truth and real light concerning God, but found unwilling to retain such knowledge, perversely bent upon abusing, disregarding, quenching out, this light from heaven ; and therefore God abandoned them to a morally hardened mind, reprobated by its own moral choices and under the laws of its own moral nature.

The result of this is that such minds are ripe for doing all the most unsuitable things [“ not convenient ”]—things revolting to their high intellectual and moral nature, so that they drift downward into all the lowest, basest forms of vice and crime.

This vivid showing up of heathenism in the concrete (as seen in men) ranges its descriptive terms into three classes : (a) “ Men filled with,” etc.—(b) “ Men full of,” &c.—(c) A group of names for special classes of criminals, “ backbiters ;” “ haters of God,” etc., etc. Of this entire description, we scarcely need to say more than this :—that the list is appalling ; that human language has been nearly exhausted of its names for the lowest vices and most dreadful crimes ; and finally that dark as the catalogue is, the facts of heathen life, wherever seen, sustain the indictment as by no means extravagant, but quite within the truth. Paul does not mean to say that every heathen man becomes thus fearfully base and vicious ; but that these vices abound as the natural result of rejecting and debasing the true knowledge of God.

32. Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they

which commit such things are worthy of death, not **only** do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

The first [Greek] “who” is the same as in v. 25 above, with the same special significance. *viz.*, these *being men who know* the just judgments of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death. Well knowing this, they yet not only do these wicked deeds but approve and delight in those who do them. That is, without even the small apology which the presence and power of temptation are supposed to lend for crime, they sustain these men of crime by their good will and their social influence. Thus those who ought to be the better portion of the heathen world lend their social influence to support the whole system. They never make solid front against the horrible vices engendered by this ignoring of God and this supplanting of his name, his worship and his law, by putting in its stead idolatrous heathenism. And so it comes to pass that this system has no self-recuperating power. Whole nations of men sink under it into depths of moral debasement, out of which, of themselves and apart from all special light coming from God and his people, they never rise.

Pausing here a moment to consider the objects had in view by the writer in this discussion of the sin, the folly, and the immediate causes of idolatrous heathenism, we cannot fail to see—

(1.) That he meant to show their need of that gospel which it was his high commission to preach to the Gentiles. He would shew, not only that they are awfully deep in debasement, vice and crime, but that they have no self-recuperative power, and will never of their own motion emerge from their debasement—never, save under the redeeming forces of the glorious gospel.

(2.) He would show that their debasement was in no proper sense their misfortune rather than their fault, but directly, immediately, the fruit of their sin-loving, and truth-hating spirit ;—because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and because their wicked heart drifted with such fearful power toward and unto the lowest depths of moral debasement and sin.

(3.) Remarkably, as Paul puts the case here, the “point of departure” from which men began to degenerate into disowning the true God, casting off his fear,

changing the glory of the invisible God into images of all earthly and base things, was from such light of nature as did reveal to them God's eternal power and Deity, and also his real beneficence toward his creature man. This assumes that even with no light from a written revelation, men are without excuse if they withhold from the true God the reverent worship due to their known Creator and their real and certain Benefactor.

Thus Paul answers the question often asked in our age : What about the heathen ? Having had no fair chance yet of knowing God and reaching salvation, ought they not to have another probation ? Can it be just in God to bring upon them retribution for their sin—the poor unfortunate creatures having had so poor a probation—a light so dim ; a chance for themselves so very meager ? It is not perhaps clear whether such questions had fallen on the ear of Paul, but it is very clear how he would have answered them.



C H A P T E R I I.

PAUL turns to those who condemn the sins of the heathen but commit the same sins themselves (1-3) ; who despise God's rich goodness as if not conscious that this should lead them to repentance (4) ; who treasure up wrath for themselves in the day of God's rendering justice to all (5, 6) ; to the well-doers, eternal life ; but to ill-doers, only wrath, whether they be Jews or Gentiles (7-11) ; treats separately the case of those who sin without the written law, and those who sin under such law (12-16) ; then more definitely, the case of Jews who have the written law and assume to be able to teach others (17-20) ; yet teaching others teach not themselves but sin against the light they have, to the dishonor of God's name (21-24) ; resting in their circumcision which, without obedience of heart, goes for nothing (25-29).

1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest : for wherein thou judgest another,

thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

It is scarcely doubtful that Paul having spoken in Chapter I. 18–32 of the idolatrous heathen, turns here to the case of the Jew,—the Jew taught in the law ; vain of his superior knowledge ; haughtily censorious and disdainful of the Gentile, but himself practicing the same wicked deeds, and far more guilty because sinning against far greater light.—True, Paul was too sagacious to call the Jew by name at the outset, although his name and description appear without concealment farther on (9, 17–29). It was wiser at the first to put it as he does ;—“ O man, whosoever thou art that judgest thy pagan brother, and yet doest thyself the very things thou dost condemn in him. Every Jewish reader must see his own face and heart in this mirror. His scorn of the Gentile was national, and morally considered, awfully guilty before God—not to say revolting to all right-minded men. Closely translated, Paul’s words are ;—“ In what thou judgest the other ”—that other one than thyself — “ thou condemnest thyself.”—v. 2 reads ;—“ For we know ”—everybody knows, and no man can help knowing that the condemnatory judgment of God is truthful, righteous, against men who do such things—*i.e.* who have light enough to reprobate the sin of the heathen, and yet depravity enough to perpetuate the same crimes. This is one of the intuitive convictions of all human minds. The guiltiest Jew could not deny it, however terribly this conviction must react upon himself to his own condemnation.

3. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ?

Paul appeals to the Jews’ own conscience : Dost thou *think*, in the exercise of thy moral sense and powers of reasoning on moral questions—O thou man who hast moral light enough to condemn such sin, yet doest the same thyself—that thou canst escape the judgment of God ? Utterly unable to escape condemnation at the bar of thine own conscience, canst thou hope to escape the condemnation

tion of God? “If thy heart condemn thee, God is greater than thy heart”—and his condemnation is more fearfully sure!

4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

“Or”—take yet another view of your case. Turning for the moment from the judgment you form against Gentile sinners and also from your own conscious self-condemnation,—look into the merits of the case—the very nature of your sin. Toward yourselves God has manifested his goodness, forbearance and long-suffering in most exuberant richness. Dost thou make light of this,—literally, *think down upon it* as a matter of the least possible account, worth scarce a thought and no practical regard—all as if thou wert utterly unaware, all unconscious, that the goodness of God legitimately leads to repentance—was so designed of God in his wisdom and love? Dost thou live on through long years of life, all reckless of God’s forbearance and long suffering, thoughtless of his great goodness toward thee?

5. But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

But, instead of yielding thyself to be led to repentance by God’s marvellous goodness, thou art following the drift and proclivities of thy hardened impenitent heart, and so art treasuring up for thyself wrath, to be manifested in the great day of God’s wrath and righteous judgment.

This “treasuring up” stands over against the wonderful riches of God’s goodness (as in v. 4). God masses the riches of his goodness, if so be He may draw men to repentance; but they heap up treasures of his righteous wrath against the dreadful day when he must vindicate his justice and honor his law and his throne!—Of this great day of wrath, Paul has more to say below.

The reader can scarcely need to be told that the scriptures of both the Old Testament and the New testify in

clear, ringing tones to the certainty, the fearfulness and the justice of that day of doom for the wicked. (See in the Old Testament Ps. 62: 12; Prov. 24: 12; Eccl. 12: 13, 14; Jer. 32: 19; and in the New, Mat. 16: 27 and 25; 31-46; 2 Cor. 5: 10—Gal. 6: 7—Eph. 6: 8—Col. 3: 24 Rev. 2: 23 and 20: 12 and 22: 12). Everywhere deeds are the basis upon which the final judgment proceeds. The law holds this doctrine, and the gospel scheme no less.

7. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:

8. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.

9. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10. But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11. For there is no respect of persons with God.

These verses simply expand and apply the doctrine briefly put in v. 6. To those on the one hand who persevere patiently in well-doing, and thus, as God and his truth lead them on, seek for glory, honor and immortality, God will award immortal life. But to those on the other hand who are—not precisely “contentious” but who are intriguers, religious schemers, who suborn their religion to base personal ends of vain glory; who obey not the truth [in the love of it] but obey unrighteousness—to such, God will award his indignation and his wrath, even “tribulation” [inflicted from without themselves] and “anguish” [a sense of utter straitness and despair of help] upon every soul of man who worketh out evil. The word rendered “contentious,” the best critics derive from a root which signifies, not precisely strife in general, but that very specific sense which I have indicated—partizanship, scheming for pre-eminence. In choosing this word, Paul put his finger on the then prevalent type of Pharisaic ambition in which they prostituted the most sacred things to worldly and base purposes. The word is used characteristically in Phil. 1: 16 and 2: 3.

But over against this, yet on the same law of rendering

according to deeds, God will award glory, honor and peace to every worker of good—to all well-doing men ; first and especially to the Jew as being foremost in religious privileges, and so as being pre-eminently the illustrative example of God's righteous retribution upon both good and evil ;—afterward to the Gentile.

It should be noted that the gospel scheme of salvation by faith makes no exception to the universal law—*judgment according to deeds* ; for that gospel must carry in it and with it repentance from sin and a new life of obedience as the fruit of its faith and love ; or it is proven to be void, false, and of no effect.

That “there is no respect of persons with God” comes in here to verify the fact that Jew and Gentile fall under the same universal principle of justice and retribution—*i.e.* according to their personal deeds and deserts.

12. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law ;

13. (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves :

15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another ;

16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

In these verses Paul treats the exceedingly vital case of those who (unlike the Jews) have no written, revealed law—no other law save what God has implanted in their intelligent and moral nature. Of these Paul says—(a) That as many as sin without written law shall be judged, not by it, but without it ; *i.e.* on the basis, not of what they knew not and could not know, but of what they did know or might have known ;—(b) While on the other hand, as many as have sinned *in* the law in possession of it and in circumstances under which they knew or might have known it, shall be judged by this law.

Here the Jew should be reminded that to be merely a *hearer* of the public reading of the law could not make him righteous before God ; for only the *doers* of the law are justified.—In v. 14 the case of the Gentile is resumed. “ For when Gentiles, (any Gentile), having not the written law, do what the law requires under the dictates of their reason and conscience [the mere law of nature], these are a law unto themselves inasmuch as they show the work of the law [its identical requirements and just principles] written in their very hearts—their conscience bearing joint testimony and their reasonings among themselves accusing or excusing. For in their abstract discussions of moral questions, and also in their approval or disapproval of the moral actions of others, they give free scope to their moral judgments as to things right or wrong, and thus show most decisively that they *know* both what other men ought to do, and also what they themselves should do.—This is Paul’s doctrine in regard to the moral responsibility of the heathen, apart from the revealed law of God. Beyond all question he holds that their intelligence, conscience, moral sense, give them in the main just conceptions of duty both toward God and toward men. On this basis and on no other (specially not upon the basis of the written law which they had not) will they be judged in the final day.

Noticeably Paul holds that in that great day, God will judge “ the secrets”—the very hearts as well as the outward lives, of all men whether Jews or Gentiles. This is the doctrine which he is commissioned to preach. It is through the immediate agency and by the person of *Jesus Christ*, that God will hold this great judgment and award its final and august decisions. With this momentous fact Paul closed his great speech on Mars Hill (Acts 17: 22-31) ; “ God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness *by that man* whom he hath ordained [to this service], of which he has given assurance unto all men [a public and perfect guaranty or pledge] in raising him from the dead.”—This great judgment could by no means embrace all nations if it were to be limited to those who have the written law. But being restricted by no limitation—made broad as human nature itself, extending to all intelligent and morally reasoning men, it can apply readily and most equitably to all the nations, Jew or Gentile.

On this great subject—the moral responsibilities of the heathen before God, we cannot reasonably fail to recognize Paul's inspiration. But apart from this divine endorsement of his doctrine, it may properly be borne in mind that, being called of God especially to be the apostle to the heathen, he must have made this whole subject a very special study. Probably no man ever studied it more diligently or more profoundly, or with better opportunities for mastering its principles and tracing its developments.

17. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.

18. And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

19. And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness;

20. An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

The better textual authorities begin v. 17 not with “Behold” [ide] but with [ei de] “But if”—*i.e.* suppose thou art called a Jew *etc.*—the afterpart of this suspended sentence beginning with v. 21; “Then, being a teacher of others, dost thou not teach thyself?” If thou bearest the honored name of Jew and dost rest complacently in the law as thy great national distinction and glory, and makest thy boast in God as the God of the nation *etc.*, and (v. 19) hast a very self-complacent confidence that thou art a guide of the blind [heathen]—thus having the *form* of knowledge and of the truth which is in and through the law. Perhaps Paul would have laid some emphasis upon “form,” to signify that it might in their case be form rather than substance—the words more than the spirit of this knowledge. It is manifest that he meant to put in bold relief, their self-conceit of superior wisdom and their pride in the national distinction of being able to teach the heathen nations far more of the true God and of pure morality than it had been given them to know.

In this stage of his argument with the Jew Paul would not deny this superiority of knowledge, but he would very pointedly suggest that this knowledge carried with itself grave responsibilities, particularly in the points of living

worthily of their better light ; of disabusing their minds of their vanity ; of taking home to their souls a sense of the amazing guilt of knowing yet not doing their duty, and of teaching the heathen what sin is, yet themselves practicing the very sins they know so well how to condemn.

21. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal ?

22. Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery dost thou commit adultery ? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ?

23. Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God ?

24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

The Greek word for “therefore” [oun] gathers up all the points previously put in the first part of this long sentence—thus ; since these things are so, dost thou, teaching another, *not* teach thyself ? Preaching *not* to steal, dost thou steal ? Saying, *not* commit adultery, dost thou do it thyself ? Abhorring idols, dost thou rob the God of the temple—*i.e.* of the honor and homage due his holy name ?—Apparently it is in this sense that Paul’s question implies the horrible guilt of the Jew in robbing God of his due honor while at the same moment he was denouncing heathen idolatry.—V. 23 might equally well be read affirmatively inasmuch as the construction obviously changes and v. 24 is affirmative, based on the assumption that v. 23 is also. Thou who makest thy boast in the law, (proud of having it in possession), yet by transgressing that very law, thou dost dishonor the [true] God. “For the name of the [true] God is blasphemed among the Gentiles *on your account*, as it is written” [Isa 52 : 5].—The Greek student would notice that Paul does not say precisely—“blasphemed by you”—personally as by your own lips,—but *on your account*.* It was their ungodly life, coupled with their pre-eminent knowledge of God, their high professions, and their glorious opportunities, that brought such reproach on the name of God before the heathen.

* The preposition (dia) being followed not by the genitive, but by the accusative.

The words—“as it is written”—*i.e.* in your scriptures, which Paul refers to but does not stop to quote, are supposably those of Isaiah—“my name continually every day is blasphemed” (Isa 52 : 5).

25. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

26. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

27. And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29. But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter, whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

Noticeably Paul knows the thought and heart of the Pharisee so well that he anticipates what he will say, and strikes at once to the answer. Thou, my Pharisaic reader, wilt say to me ;—Please remember, O Paul, that we have the glorious national distinction of circumcision. We are thus made the recognized children of Abraham and heirs of his covenant with God. Aye indeed, Paul replies ; “*for* circumcision is really profitable *if* thou fulfil the law; but if thou art a transgressor of the law, then thy circumcision becomes uncircumcision. It throws you at once out of the pale of the covenant into the status of all uncircumcised men. Moreover, if the uncircumcised man keeps the righteous precepts of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be accounted to him for circumcision? [Certainly so; for God cares for the righteousness and not at all for the merely external rite.] And the man who in his natural state is uncircumcised, yet keeps the law, shall judge thee a transgressor of the law though having the letter of the law and circumcision besides; and moreover despite of all that the letter and this outward rite can do for you. For [v. 28] not he of the outward is a real Jew, nor is that of the outward—(in the flesh only), circumcision; but he of the in-

ward is the Jew, and [genuine] circumcision is of the heart—in spirit, not in letter,—whose praise is not of men, but of God. [Men may not praise this purity and grace, unseen of them ; but God does.]

This somewhat close translation of Paul's words may suffice for comment on this very clear and forcible passage.



C H A P T E R III.

THE advantage of the Jew lay in having the written word (v. 1, 2) : God's word of promise not vitiated by man's unbelief (v. 3, 4) ; discussion of the assumed notion that man's sin enures to the glory of God (v. 5, 8) ; Jew and Gentile all alike under sin, shown from Scripture (v. 9–18) ; this proof from the law bears specially upon those under the law, so that all the world stands guilty before God (v. 19) : The law powerless for justification ; useful only to reveal men's sin (v. 20) ; but God's system for making men righteous, working apart from law, is now made known, working by and through faith (v. 21, 22) ; which finds all men in sin and justifies them gratuitously by grace through Christ's redemption (v. 23, 24)—Christ having been set forth as a propitiatory offering to show how God was righteous in remitting long past sins—a way in which he is just to himself while yet he justifies believers in Christ (v. 25, 26). Hence faith shuts off boasting and justification avails without the aid of deeds of law (v. 27, 28)—all which is good for Gentiles as for Jews (v. 29, 30) : faith does not make void law but establishes it (v. 31).

1. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision?

2. Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

As Micah, the idolater, said—“They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?” So the Pharisee is supposed to cry—They have taken away my circumcision, and what have I more? What is left the Jew?

And what is his circumcision good for when the outward is gone ?

Paul answers : Much every way ; but chiefly that God has given them in trust his written oracles—the sacred scriptures—a priceless treasure, would they but appreciate and appropriately use them.

3. For what if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect ?

4. God forbid : yea, let God be true, but every man a liar : as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Nor have the possible benefits of this great trust been vitiated and lost by reason of the extensive unbelief of the nation : For shall their unbelief make void the good faith of God ? Will God cease to be true because Jews, never so many, become false and faithless ? Never ! Let this never be said or thought ! Rather let God be true and be honored as true, though every man prove a liar—as David said (Ps. 51 : 4) “ That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and mightest come off conqueror whenever called in question and to trial.”

5. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say ? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance ? (I speak as a man).

6. God forbid : for then how shall God judge the world ?

Yet another point : Suppose that our unrighteousness serves to prove the more strongly and to set forth the more conspicuously the righteousness of God : what shall we say ? Would God in that case be unrighteous were He to take vengeance—*i. e.* in punishing that sin which had served to set forth his righteousness ?—Here Paul remarks in an under tone (“ I speak as a man ”) :—but what is his precise meaning in these words ? Supposably this :—I say this from the human stand-point of view, putting it upon the basis of human principles of judging as between man and man. Even to our human eyes this must appear entirely obvious. Therefore let this never be said ! For if it were so ; how could God judge the world ? For nothing can be

mere obvious than this—that in judging the world of mankind, God must needs deal with an infinite amount of human sin which has been overruled by himself for his own glory, and which has resulted in making more conspicuous his infinite patience and boundless love, not to say also his glorious justice. Perhaps we might even say that never a sin is perpetrated which God does *not* overrule to the manifestation of his own higher glory.—Plainly He could never judge the world at all if the fact that sin endures to his own glory precluded him from punishing it.

7. For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory ; why yet am I also judged as a sinner ?

8. And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come ? whose damnation is just.

In v. 7 he puts the same point in the yet more definite and specific form of man's falsehood as against God's truth. If God's truth is made to abound [in manifestation] to his own glory by my lie, why am I to be judged as a sinner notwithstanding ? Why should we not rather say ;—“ Let us do the evil,” *i. e.* of this lying, “ that the good ” [of God's greater glory] “ may thereby come ? ” So we are slanderously reported as saying ;—but the damnation of such slanderers and of men advocating such doctrine, is forever just !—That is all I need to say of it.

Throughout this passage, the discussion seems to be with the Jew.

9. What then ? are we better *than they* ? No, in no wise : for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin ;

10. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one :

11. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13. Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their

tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps *is* under their lips :

14. Whose month *is* full of cursing and bitterness :
15. Their feet *are* swift to shed blood :
16. Destruction and misery *are* in their ways :
17. And the way of peace have they not known :
18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

This is the old question : Are we Jews better than they Gentiles—a question which the well known conceit of the Pharisaic Jew kept constantly before Paul's mind. He answers it again :—No, in no wise ; for we have shown already that all are under sin :—have shown it of the Gentiles, chap. 1 : 18–32 ; and of the Jews, throughout chap. 2.—But to make this most vital point doubly strong, he returns to it.—The case of the Gentiles needed no further showing before Pharisaic Jews. The case of the Jew calls for more showing. He puts this best by appeal to their own scriptures—no higher authority with them being possible. The quotation is from Ps. 14 and 53—filling here v. 10–18. The description is very strong. The spirit of their sinning as here set forth is awfully venomous, as if the poison of asps were under their lips ; outbreaking even to murder [“feet swift to shed blood”] ; over-riding and perverting all their good sense [“none that understandeth”] ; “the way of peace they have not known ;” excluding all “fear of God :” and withal so absolutely universal that “there is none righteous ; no, not one.” Therefore if the testimony of God himself be admitted, the Jews are all brought under sin, and consequently under condemnation.

19. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law ; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

At this critical stage of his discussion, Paul feels the necessity of moving with the utmost logical strength, making every cardinal point unmistakably clear, as here ;—What things the law saith (as in the passage just quoted from David), we know it must say to those who are under the law—*i. e.* to Jews who have this law, and not to the unenlightened heathen who have it not—a point which the most self-justifying Pharisee could not deny. This

fearful arraignment of guilt, lying, therefore, against the whole body of the Jews, and the Gentiles being of course utterly condemned according to the theology of the Pharisee, it comes to pass that every mouth is stopped and the whole world becomes guilty before God.

20. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight : for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

The delicate point in this verse is the precise sense of its first word “Therefore” [Greek *dioti*] which some read “*therefore*,” making the impossibility of justification upon the basis of mere law an inference from what precedes in v. 19 : while others read it “*Because*,” introducing a new but collateral fact, *viz.* that no man can be justified by mere law, because the use and purpose of the law are to make sin more manifest—to give men a clearer, better knowledge of it.—The former construction (that of the authorized version) is to be preferred, it being an undeniable inference from what precedes that no living man can be justified on the ground of perfect obedience to law, for he never obeys that law perfectly.—The law has another use than that of becoming the ground of justification, *viz.* to give a more just view of sin, a *better knowledge* as Paul’s word implies.

All this, the reader will notice, is preparing the way for the grand idea which Paul is about to introduce ; *viz.* God’s new and perfect scheme for justifying sinners, even through the gospel, by faith in an atoning Redeemer.

21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ;

22. Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe ; for there is no difference :

23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God :

“But now”—“now” referring to the new light of the gospel scheme, set over against the dimness of the foregoing dispensation.—*Apart from law* (better than “without law”), *i. e.* on a scheme which does not lean upon law

at all—God's plan of justifying men is made manifest—not indeed entirely new to mankind, for some testimony to it had been borne previously by the law and the prophets—the Old Testament Scriptures.

Even (v. 22) God's mode of justification “by faith of Jesus Christ” (*i. e.* by faith *in* Christ) availing unto all believing ones, for there is no difference *i. e.* between Jew and Gentile, all being equally under sin and equally precluded from salvation in any other possible way—all having sinned and having failed of the glorious approval of God—that glory which accrues from his final approbation and reward.

24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25. Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God :

26. To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

These verses expand more fully God's wonderful scheme of justifying sinners by faith. “Being justified *gratuitously*”—as a free gift, not based at all upon their perfect obedience. “By his grace”—his real mercy, coming through that redemption which is provided for in Christ Jesus.—“Whom God has set forth, a propitiation”—*i.e.* a propitiatory offering of a sacrificial nature, designed to make such atonement for sin as will render gratuitous pardon possible to God's mercy—made available to the sinner through faith in Christ's name. Then amplifying yet more the divine purpose in this propitiation, Paul adds—“For the purpose of showing his [God's] righteousness in the case of his remitting sins long past—the sins of the ages before Christ came which in God's great forbearance had been passed over ;—for the purpose of setting forth in this present time how he could be righteous in such remission ;—*i.e.* to show himself to be just and yet the justifier of him who has faith in Jesus. The two related things to be shown, *viz.*, that God is just to himself, just toward his law, his throne and all its interests, on the one hand ; and

on the other, the justifier of every believing one, accepting him as pardoned and justified on the ground of his faith in Christ—these together disclose the essence and explain the deep philosophy of this divine scheme of God for justifying sinners.

Reviewing this pregnant passage for the purpose of bringing out if possible yet more distinctly its salient and vital points, let it be noted—

1. That all along the foregoing ages God had been remitting the sins of his people.

2. But he had not shown clearly on what ground he had done this, nor how he could do it and yet be just to the interests of his moral government, just to his veracity in his threatenings against sin and sinners, and just to his responsibilities for the well being of a universe of moral agents.

3. Something had indeed been done during the past ages toward illustrating the principles on which this remission of sin had taken place, particularly in the way of setting them forth under symbols and types which might at least serve to define a class of terms for future use, and so provide for a more clear manifestation of the vital things, at some future day.

4. Yet it still remained to make this final and far more lucid showing which should set forth *how* God could be just while yet he justified the believer in Jesus. The reader cannot fail to notice the great emphasis put by constant reiteration upon the idea of *setting forth, showing, making manifest*; nor can he fail to see that the thing to be made manifest was precisely what he puts in the phrase, “The righteousness of God by faith,” and which he expands yet more as the showing how God could be at the same time *just* and yet justify the penitent sinner who believes in Jesus.

This ultimate showing, this final setting forth, for which the old Mosaic system had made such preparation and had so well illustrated its standard terms and ideas, was to be made by bringing forth Christ as being himself the redemption and the propitiation, available through faith in his blood, which should make manifest that God was righteous in the remitting of past sins. Jesus came to fulfil the significance, long almost unknown, of those Old Testament terms—“redemption,” “propitiation,” “remission of sins.”

5. Finally, the vital point (as said already) was to vindicate God's justice in the pardon of sin, *i.e.* to show how he could be just and could yet account as just and also cause to be really just, the sinner who believes in Jesus.

27. Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.

28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Is there anything here for the boasting Pharisee who "thanks God that he is not as other men are?" Not a thing. All such boasting is shut off utterly. On what principle? Is it on the principle of the law of works? By no means; but of the law of faith. For, faith puts him right before God on the ground, not of his own meritorious works but on the ground of his faith in Christ. According to the notion of the proud Pharisee his deeds were a valid foundation for boasting; but no man could think of boasting over the undeserved mercy that comes to the sinner from Christ through faith in his blood.

The approved text (first clause of v. 28), reads—not "therefore, but for." We come logically to the conclusion that a man is justified apart from deeds of law, meritorious works having no part in the transaction, constituting no part of the ground of his pardon.

29. *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30. Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

Or is he the God of the Jews only, reserving all his favors for them alone? This would be indeed the case if works of law were the necessary condition of being justified, for the Gentiles have not even had the written law to use for this purpose. But is not He the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, certainly; even the Old Testament is full of prophetic declarations that God's great love includes the Gentile world (v. 30) inasmuch as it is the One God (one and the same) who will justify the circumcised Jew on the ground of his faith, and the uncircumcised Gentile by or through this (the same) faith. Here the reader might ask why we have in the first case "by faith," and in the

second, “through faith.” The Greek involves the same problem ; Why did Paul put [ek] before “faith” in the case of the circumcised Jew, and [dia] before it, for the uncircumcised Gentile ? I doubt if any sensible answer can be given but this ; Either from mere accident, or for the sake of variety. For the whole scope of the argument here forbids us to admit the least fundamental difference between Jew and Gentile in this respect, *viz.* the relation of their faith respectively, to justification,—It is perhaps supposable that in using “ek.” of the Jew, Paul followed the passage he had previously quoted (1: 17) from Hab. 2:6 :—“The just shall live of [etc.] his faith.” Then, coming to the case of the Gentile, he used the nearly synonymous [dia] with the genitive, introducing here the article—by means of *the* same faith.

31. Do we then make void the law through faith ? God forbid : yea, we establish the law.

Do we then make void law through this faith ;—literally (the Greek article) through *the* faith, *i. e.* of the gospel system ? By no means ; but we establish law.

Twice in this connection (*viz.* v 21, 28) Paul has said very emphatically that this justification by faith takes effect apart from law.*

Hence, well aware of the rising thought of his Pharisaic reader, he anticipates his objection, *viz.* *That* must annul (make void) all law. You save men without law : What is that but abrogating law ; making law amount to nothing at all !—Nay, replies Paul ; we rather establish law on firmer, better ground than ever.

Here two main questions arise—(1.) As to the sense of the word “law” in this passage ?—(2.) As to the verification of Paul’s words—the manner in which the doctrine of justification by faith only and quite apart from meritorious works, sustains law and makes it firm.

The sense of the word “law” in this passage is in dispute among very worthy critics : *e. g.* Stuart and Meyer argue strenuously that “law” here means the Old Testament scriptures and insist that the next chapter is Paul’s vindication of the point put here, showing that the Old Testament Scriptures teach and sustain his doctrine of justification by faith.

* $\chi\omega\zeta\nu\vartheta\; \nu\eta\mu\nu$.

I am compelled to dissent from their exegesis, and maintain that “ law ” here is used in the same sense as above, particularly in v. 21, 28—*i. e.* the moral law of God as a rule of duty :—and on these grounds :

1. Our authorized version does not fairly represent Paul’s word. Paul did not say “ the law,” but simple “ law,” without the article. If he had referred to the Old Testament Scriptures, he should have said “ *the law*,” this being the invariable usage.* But inasmuch as he actually said only “ law,” we are compelled to take the word to mean, God’s great rule of moral duty ; and the more so because the foregoing context and the argument Paul is making demand it. Certainly Paul has been speaking of “ law ” in this very sense (v. 20.) “ By deeds of law shall no flesh be justified ; ” for by law is the better knowledge of sin ;” and (v. 21.)—“ But now, *without law* ” (not without “ *the law*), the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed by *the law* and the prophets”—the article being here because in this case it means the Pentateuch—a part of the Old Testament.—Also (v. 28), “ A man is justified by faith without deeds of law ”—(not “ of *the law*. ”) †

2. Some of the critics say that if we understand Paul to speak of moral law in general, he does not answer the objector at all.—To this it should suffice to reply—(a.) That he has already said the law is good to give a better knowledge of sin (v. 20.)—which assumes the law to be in force—not abrogated, but confirmed ; and (b.) That he defers the further answer to this Pharisaic objection to a later point in his discussion (chap. 6–8).

3. The objection raised here by the Pharisee is certainly *not* answered in chap. 4, and therefore “ law ” cannot be used here in the sense of the Old Testament Scriptures as brought forward in that chapter. For, the scope of Rom. 4 is *not* aimed to show that Paul’s justification by faith established law (in the sense of the Old Testament Scriptures) but that the Old Testament Scriptures establish *it* ; —not that justification does not make void the Old Testa-

* See Matt. 5 : 17, 18 and 7: 12 and 11 : 13 and 12 : 5 and so on everywhere if the meaning be—“ the law ” used for the Old Testament Scriptures.

† Paul’s usage—omitting the article before “ law ” when he takes the word in its general sense of man’s rule of duty, is entirely uniform.

ment Scriptures, but that those scriptures do not make void but really prove *it*. That is, Paul appeals to the Old Testament to confirm from them his doctrine of justification by faith, and not at all to refute the Pharisaic objection that he was annulling law and making it of no account.



CHAPTER IV.

THE Pharisaic Jew gloried in having Abraham for his father ("We have Abraham to our father," Matt. 3, 9) — and assumed himself entitled to every blessing promised to Abraham inasmuch as circumcision brought him within the Abrahamic covenant. Furthermore, it is clear that in his view Abraham and all the circumcised held their blessings on the ground of works, not of faith ; of doings, and not of simple believing. Paul knew perfectly how this matter lay in their mind, and therefore devoted this chapter to meet and refute their errors on this point ; aiming comprehensively to show that according to their own scriptures Abraham's righteousness (acceptance before God) came of faith, not of works : that David taught the same when he spoke of the blessedness of the man forgiven of sin ; that Abraham attained this righteousness of faith *before* he was circumcised, and therefore his righteousness could not depend on his circumcision ; that hence he became the father of all believing Gentiles who like himself believed before, and without the aid of, circumcision. As to the circumcised Jew, he could be the father of those only who had like faith with his. This faith of Abraham he sets forth in its constituent elements, particularly showing that it turns, not at all upon works of merit, but wholly upon free grace.

1. What shall we say then that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found ?
2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory ; but not before God.

Breaking in with apparent abruptness because the notions of the Pharisaic Jews were too well known both to

himself and to his readers to require formal statement, he asks,—What blessings did our common father derive from his circumcision in the flesh? The authorized version connects the word “flesh” with “father”; but it is better to connect it with the verb “found”—(1.) Because there was not the least occasion to say—father as to the flesh; and (2.) the gist of the question is—What benefit did he derive from fleshly circumcision—that is, from circumcision as an external rite, in the flesh?—It is precisely in this sense of the question that Paul proceeds to say—For if this circumcision, considered as a work—a thing of personal merit—availed to Abraham’s justification before God, then he had something to glory in—some ground of personal complacency and even of boasting: but the very idea of this *as toward God* is abhorrent to our moral sense. Therefore Paul makes this emphatic declaration: How much soever of merit might lie in Abraham’s prompt obedience to a painful rite, we can never think of its being the meritorious ground of his salvation *before God!* All boasting in it is excluded in the presence of the great and holy God!

3. ‘For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

With the Pharasaic Jew, arguments from his own scriptures are always in order; therefore Paul appeals to that pivotal passage, the bearing of which on the point in hand was at once entirely plain and perfectly decisive;—“Abraham believed God, and it (this faith) was counted unto him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). It availed for him unto the result (so the Greek) of righteousness;—*i. e.* of acceptance before God as a righteous man.

4. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

The man who works has his reward, not as a gratuity but as a debt. The man who does not work but only believes upon one who justifies the sinner is on a totally different footing. His faith (not his work) is made the

ground of his acceptance as righteous. These points are put by Paul very distinctly and in this antithetic form ;—To the working man his reward does not come by gratuitous mercy, but by right—as a debt due ;—but, on the other hand, to him who worketh not, but simply rests in faith upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his resting faith counts to him for righteousness.

6. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7. *Saying*, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

A quotation from David is here fully in point (Ps. 32 : 1) which expatiates on the blessedness of the man who is consciously a great sinner : who cries for mercy, here as also in Ps. 51 ;—this Psalm, be it noted, referring to that same wonderful scene of penitential prayer and to the inexpressible relief and blessedness of conscious pardon. David celebrates in song the blessedness of this free pardon given to conscious sinners who feel that they deserve nothing—given on the basis of God's loving kindness and great mercy under which he no longer imputes to them their sin, but accounts them righteous yet not at all on the ground of meritorious works.

9. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also ? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10. How was it then reckoned ? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision ? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

Here Paul raises another thoroughly vital question :—Is this blessedness of which David speaks restricted to the circumcised ; or may it come to the uncircumcised as well ?—We can readily settle this great question ; for you will remember we have seen that Abraham's righteousness came of his faith—turned upon his faith and upon this only. Now then, we have only to ask—What was his state as to circumcision when this righteousness was reckoned

to his account? Was he then a circumcised man, or a man uncircumcised?

History settles this question peremptorily and forever. He was not at that time a circumcised man, but a man uncircumcised. Therefore his righteousness was in no wise dependent upon circumcision.—[The Bible reader will find the record of Abraham's faith accounted to him for righteousness, in Gen. 15: 6; while the record of his circumcision appears many years later in Gen. 17: 23-27.]

11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also;

12. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised.

These verses are Paul's very remarkable comment upon the historic fact that Abraham's saving faith came before his circumcision. As the result of this fact, Abraham became the father of a very great family—a family made up of two distinct classes; *viz.* (1.) All Gentiles who believe as he did before, and independently of, circumcision: and (2.) All Jews who walk in the steps of the faith which Abraham had before his circumcision. The Gentile comes in upon the same ground as his great believing father Abraham: the Jew comes in if he has like faith with Abraham's, but by no means (let him notice) on the ground of his circumcision. As to the Jew, his circumcision does not preclude him if only he has faith like Abraham's; but this faith he must certainly have, or he is no son of Abraham.

13. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was not* to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14. For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15. Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.

For not on the ground of law was the promise to Abraham and to his seed that he should be the heir of the world ; but on the ground of the righteousness of faith.

The phrase—“Heir of the world”—assumes that the world was to be in some sense his inheritance. In him and in his seed were the nations to be blessed, and their blessedness should be a royal, princely good to him.—Then v. 14, resumes Paul’s argument :—“For if the men of law” (as opposed to men of faith)—men who relied for justification before God on perfect obedience to law—had become heirs of the world, then faith would be virtually null (empty of result as Paul’s word suggests), and the promise of no use.

He proceeds :—That the law should be powerless toward such a result is simply inevitable ; for the law works wrath; *i. e.* the knowledge of law increases light, and so increases the guilt of those who sin in spite of light. Apparently Paul assumes also that mere law never moves sinners to repentance and new obedience, and therefore, left to its own normal influence, it only avails to augment human guilt.—Where there is no law, there is no transgression, for transgression is a conscious over-stepping, over-riding, and trampling under foot, of law.

16. Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham ; who is the father of us all.

17. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were :

18. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

On this account did God hinge his plan for human salvation upon faith to the end it might be of grace—*i.e.* might afford unlimited scope for his mercy ; so that his promise might be firm to all the seed of Abraham (as above v. 11, 12.)—*i.e.* to the Gentile who is Abraham’s son only in the matter of faith ; and to the Jew who walks in the steps of his lineal father’s faith. Put in the phrase of

v. 16, it is thus :—Not only to him of the law (the Jew), but to him of Abraham's faith (the Gentile believer). Now Paul expatiates upon this precious fact that God made Abraham the father of all who like him believe ; and thus to the extent of many nations, Gentile as well as Jew.

To set forth the strength of this faith of Abraham in full light, Paul reminds us that he believed in God's power to vivify what was dead, and to speak of things apparently impossible as though they were certain and sure. Thus in the strength of his faith Abraham believed against all human probability—("against hope, believed in hope,") and so reached the exalted honor of becoming the father of many nations.

19. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb :

20. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

21. And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able to perform.

22. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

These verses expatiate upon and reaffirm the great faith of this glorious model of implicit confidence in God.

23. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him :

24. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ;

25. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

His example is put on record, not for his sake specially but for our sake—for the sake of all ages thenceforward, and especially for the sake of illustrating the place which faith holds in this scheme of justification before God. As his faith was accounted to him the basis and ground of his justification, so is it to us all if we believe on God the Father as one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead—the same who was delivered up to death for our sins, but raised again for our justification—raised from the dead to

become the Mediator of his people before the Father's throne and so to make their salvation (they believing in him) perfectly and eternally sure.



CHAPTER V.

This chapter is in two distinct paragraphs—v. 1–11, being the first; v. 12–21, the second. The first sets forth the rich blessings that come to believers through their justification by faith in Christ; *e.g.* free access to God; great joy in the assured hope of his approval and final glorious reward; a spirit that bears us up in joyous exultation over whatever tribulation; unfaltering confidence in God, inspired by conscious love toward him:—all heightened by our inference that if Christ, dying for us while yet sinners, ensured for us reconciliation to God, much more will his resurrection power avail to perfect this work unto our final glory.

The second paragraph runs a parallel by analogy between the two great representative men of our race—Adam and Christ; Adam on his side representing the sin of the race and the consequent death and condemnation:—Christ the redemption of the race, the marvellous gift of grace and the consequent exalted blessedness of his people. Throughout this passage and its extended analogy, the apostle's aim is to show that grace surpasses sin; that God's mercy is greater than his wrath; that the fruits of Christ's work for the race greatly exceed the results of sin and ruin that accrue from Adam. The whole aim and purpose of this analogy enure to heighten the main point put in the first paragraph, *viz.*, the glorious blessedness which comes through faith in Christ to all believers.

1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It should be specially noted here that this peace toward

God—peace *before* him, in his conscious presence—Paul's words must mean—involves two somewhat distinct facts ; *viz.*, (1) The absence of condemnation on God's part, and the resulting approval, friendship, love, which God bears towards his forgiven, restored children :—and (2) The conscious sense of peace toward God which the believer experiences, coupled also with a sense of free access by faith into this state of favor before God in which the justified stand. It is a precious fact in the experience of penitent, pardoned souls that this inner consciousness usually follows the first result above named—the actual restoration of peace between the Father and his returning and forgiven child. It is but fitting that God should make his attitude of peace and love toward his pardoned creatures known to their consciousness. He has ample agencies in and through the Holy Ghost for doing it.

3. And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also ; knowing that tribulation worketh patience ;

4. And patience, experience ; and experience, hope :

5. And hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

This exultant joy in the hope of God's great reward is not the only fruit of our justification by faith. Quite beyond this, we come to exult even in tribulation, inasmuch as we know [in our experience] that such tribulation works out [produces] patience ; and patience, a state of proved integrity ; and this, a stronger hope—which hope can never disappoint us because our love toward God is quickened and inspired unto overflowing by the Holy Ghost given us of God. On this last point Paul teaches elsewhere most abundantly (a) That the Holy Ghost dwells in Christian hearts as in a temple (1 Cor. 3: 16 and 6: 19 and 2 Cor. 6: 16) ;—and (b). That one of his special functions is to inspire love in the christian heart and make this love an earnest or pledge of God's responsive love and final approval and reward, (2 Cor. 1: 22 and Eph. 1: 13, 14).

6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : yet

peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

There are facts in this gospel scheme which bear with great power, both to evince God's wondrous love for us and to quicken our responsive love to Him. These facts are brought out here to verify what Paul has been saying, and are therefore introduced by "for" (gar). What he has said of our "peace with God;" of our "access by faith into" this precions state of grace; of the reason we have for even "glorying in tribulation," must be most true for while we were yet helpless, powerless, utterly hopeless of self-recovery,—in due time Christ died for us sinners. This was indeed a marvellous thing, "for" (v. 7) scarcely would any one die for a man merely righteous, though for the really *good* man, possibly one might dare to die. But God sets forth his love in strong relief—we might even say he *glorifies* it, inasmuch as, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Infinitely far from being good—far even from being just—indeed being positively wicked rebels—even then Christ laid down his life for us. There were representative men around his very cross gnashing their teeth upon him in rage and taunting him with insults while he was meekly enduring those awful agonies and pouring forth his very heart's blood unto death for the guilty.

9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

The argument here is at once plain and of surpassing moral power. If from being enemies we are brought into peace with God through Christ's death, how much more, having become his friends, shall we attain final salvation, through the power of his resurrection-life. Now that He lives and reigns in heaven to send down the fulness of his Spirit, energizing in Christian hearts, shall not his immortal life finish what his death so anspiciously began? Brought out of condemnation and death into spiritual life

and peace through his atoning death, how much more shall we be upheld and borne triumphantly through to immortal glory by his life ?

11. And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

To what does the phrase—“and not only this”—refer ? Stuart answers—To v. 3. where the same Greek words occur. Hence he would paraphrase thus : Not only do we rejoice in affliction (v. 3.) as tending to produce a hope of glory *etc.*, but we rejoice in God.—The great objection to this is that this antecedent is too remote and too long passed out of mind. It is better to refer it to “being reconciled” in the verse preceding ; thus : Not only are we reconciled to God, but we are even exultant in God through Jesus Christ by whom we have obtained this reconciliation—for so this clause should be translated. “Reconciliation” is the old and mostly obsolete sense of the word atonement [at-one-ment]. Our translators had no thought of the modern sense of the word atonement, *viz.* the provision made in Christ for the safe pardon of sin.

12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned :

13. (For until the law sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15. But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift : for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16. And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift : for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

17. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one ; much more they which receive abundance of grace

and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18. Therefore, as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound :

21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

This passage is so thoroughly one in its scope and bearings that we not only may but must study it as a whole if we would reach its true and full sense.

It scarcely needs to be said that this is one of the old Theological battle-fields. Yet of its famous war history my plan of scripture-exposition forbids me to treat. The legitimate sense of Paul's words is all I have to seek, and all I shall attempt to give.

I propose the following plan of exposition.

1. To translate the passage, expanding where it may seem necessary into brief paraphrase.

2. To group together the points of analogy between Adam and Christ ; both of likeness, similarity ; and also of unlikeness, dissimilarity.

3. To treat specially the difficult or contested points in the passage.

4. Also the moral purpose of the Apostle in this extended analogue.

1. *Translation.*—(v. 12.) Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so [consequently] death passed over all men inasmuch as all had sinned.*

(v. 13.) For until the written law [of Moses] there was sin in the world ; but sin is not taken into account where

* The clause corresponding to “as” (second word of v. 12) does not appear until we reach v. 18, 19 ; all that intervene being essentially a parenthesis, after a method very common with Paul.

there is really no law. (v. 14.) But death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those who had not sinned [under and against the light of revealed law] in the manner of the sin of Adam who is a type of the Coming One [Christ]. (v. 15). But not like the sin [of Adam] is the grace [of Christ]; for if by the sin of the one [Adam], the many have died, by how much more shall the grace of God and the free gift in the grace coming through the one man Christ Jesus, abound unto the many. (v. 16). And this free gift is not as by the one sinning man; for the sentence of the law is from one sinning man unto condemnation; but the grace is from many sins unto justification. (v. 17). For if by the sin of the one [Adam] death reigned by the one, by how much more shall they who receive the abundance of the grace and the [abundance of the] free gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.—(v. 18) Therefore, as by one sin, sentence was upon all men unto condemnation; so also by one righteousness is the free gift upon all men unto justification of life.—(v. 19). For as by the disobedience of one man [Adam] the many became [were constituted] sinners, so also by the obedience of the one shall the many become [be constituted] righteous.—(v. 20). But law entered that the offence [the guilt of sin] might abound [*i. e.* be naturally the greater because of the greater lightsinned against]; but where the sin abounded, the grace did superabound.—(v. 21). That as the sin reigned in the death, so also the grace should reign through justification unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. We group the points of analogy between Adam and Christ.

(a.) *Of likeness, similarity.*

(1.) The central figure in the doom of the race on the one hand, and its rescue on the other, is in each case *one man*; from Adam is the doom; from Jesus Christ, the rescue.

(2.) By the one man Adam sin entered and death followed upon all the race. By the other one Man [Jesus Christ] redemption came, with its provisions and possibilities for all the race, and its actualities for all believers.

(b.) *Points of unlikeness.*

The fall sprang from a single sin; yet even from a beginning so small, the ruin of death came upon the race;

but the redemption starts with forgiving the many offences of every pardoned soul, and goes on still with more blessings upon the most liberal scale.—This is the point of the argument in vs. 15, 17, and (the reader should observe) in this point the negative idea is made specially emphatic ;—*Not as the sin, so is the great grace, for inasmuch as by the sin of the one [Adam], the many die, by how much more (a point of unlikeness because grace is more affluent than justice)—by how much more shall the grace of God and the free gift embosomed in the grace which comes in the one man Jesus Christ, abound unto the many.* Then v. 16 makes this point of unlikeness yet more distinct. The free gift is not like the doom through the one sinning man ; for that sentence is from one sin unto condemnation ; but this free gift begins with blotting out many offences, and culminates in justification. And then v. 17 draws out the point of antithesis still more fully, tracing the reign of death to the sin of the one man Adam ; but inferring that *much more* must those who receive not merely grace but the *abundance* of the grace and also the abundance of the free gift of righteousness, reign in life through the One man Christ Jesus.

Then by way of general conclusion, v. 18. puts the great point of similarity (essentially the same as No. 2 above) ; By one sin (Adam's) the sentence came upon all men unto their condemnation ; So by one great righteousness (that of Christ) do blessings come to all men (to the race) unto justification. Then v. 19. follows with only the change of terms, contrasting the *disobedience* of Adam with the *obedience* of Christ ;—the many becoming sinners in consequence of the former ; the many also becoming righteous in consequence of the latter.

Such then, are the salient points in this very extended analogy between Adam on the one hand—the one head of the race with special reference to its becoming a sinning and therefore a mortal race ;—and Christ on the other hand —the one Supreme head of the race with reference to its redemption.

3. Some difficult or contested points should receive attention. (1.) Death can have no other sense here than that of human mortality—that doom of death upon the race which followed sin. No other sense of the word can be reasonably thought of.

(2.) The last clause of v. 13. ("for that all have sinned") has raised two questions : the first, grammatical, upon the exact sense of—"for that" (Gr. epi.) which I take to mean—Inasmuch as, or because,—assuming in general the fact of universal sin.—The second theological, involving this class of questions :—Does Paul affirm only that the race as such are sinners ; that this is the common law ; that all human beings do in fact sin when they reach moral accountability unless special grace interpose *etc. etc.* Or does he purposely affirm its absolute universality, making it coextensive with death ; and therefore involving the sin of infants, born or unborn, of idiots also, and the irrational animals,—since all these come under the reign of death.

Now if we propose to treat this as a question of interpretation to be solved by its legitimate laws, our way is clear. The degree or measure of universality in the word "all" must turn upon the bearing of this point in the writer's argument—in other words, upon the nature of the case. Did his argument require anything more than the *general* fact of sin in the race consequent upon the first sin—that of Adam* ? Was it at all vital to his argument to show that infants must be sinners even before they are born, that idiots are sinners, and that the brute creation (since they too die) must be sinners ?

If you could ask this great Apostle ;—Did you intend to say, or to assume, that sin exists without the exercise of moral agency ; with no present knowledge of duty to sin against ; with no idea of law to be violated ? He would (we may suppose)—reply : I had not the least occasion to express any opinion on those points. Everybody knows that this is a sinning race. That is all which my argument calls for.—Perhaps he would add—You will do me the justice not to interpret into my words more than I meant or had occasion to say.

The reader will readily notice that while, on this point of general sinfulness, Paul simply said "All have sinned," and left it there, resting obviously upon the universally known

* This principle will be readily understood. When Matthew wrote (3 : 5, 6) that Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region . . . went out to hear Him and were baptized of him, this case did not require that this "*all*" should include the infants or the invalids. The common sense of the case forbids this extreme universality.

and undeniable fact, yet he did go somewhat particularly into another question, *viz.* the existence of sin and death in the world during the interval. The reason for this special discussion is sufficiently obvious. He is writing to Jews. They understand very well that sinning presupposes some known law. Paul also held this. They made very great account of the law given through Moses, and seem to have had extreme views of the moral darkness and ignorance of law among mere heathen—*e. g.* in the period before Moses. But Paul's doctrine (brought out in Romans 2) is that not having any written law, they were a law unto themselves, their own moral nature (reason and conscience) affirming to them moral right and wrong. Hence men could and did sin during that interval between Adam and Moses; and consequently death could legitimately reign there.—This exception which the Jew might be supposed to make to the general sinfulness of the race, Paul did deem it important to notice as we see. The other points, so often mooted in theological controversy, Paul utterly ignores;—but the candid, discriminating reader will certainly notice that the doctrine [or principle] assumed (v. 13, 14) in the case of heathen without written law covers fully all the theological points extra that have been made (as above) over the clause “all have sinned.” If sin presupposes known law (written or unwritten), it certainly must presuppose the mental capacities necessary for knowing law and the moral sense necessary for recognizing its claims. For what is the use of law without the sense to know what it means and why it binds to obedience? Indeed, that some knowledge and sense of law must be possible and even present to the mind as a condition precedent to real sin needs no argument. In fact it belongs to a realm of its own in which argument with those who deny it is simply useless—its legitimate realm being the domain of the universal consciousness and common sense of mankind.

3. A third question, sometimes warmly controverted, is forcibly suggested by v. 19; “As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” If the reader shall put a strong emphasis upon the word “made,” he will see the point I propose to consider;—*viz.*, the law of connection between the sin of Adam, and the consequent sin and death of his posterity on the one hand; and also the law of con-

nexion between Christ's redemptive work for man and man's being blessed thereby, on the other. Here on the first side of the analogy, the question is not, Why and how death follows Adam's sin, but only this:—How and under what law of connection does the sin of Adam's race follow the sin of Adam? Are Adam's posterity *made sinners* by his sin under a law that pays no regard to their voluntary agency? a law, for example, which takes effect and makes them sinners before they are born, and certainly before they have knowledge of moral good and evil?

This is not the place to discuss the doctrine of *sin* in *Adam*, whether upon the assumption of actually being in him and equally responsible in the moral sense with himself, or *as representatively* in him by virtue of God's having constituted him to act morally in our behalf, holding us to all the guilt as well as all the consequences of this sin. These doctrines I must pass as being quite unnecessary to a fair interpretation of this passage, and as being too revolting to the human reason and conscience to be accepted. The Bible doctrine of the philosophy of sinning is supremely sensible—well put by James (1: 13–15); “Let no man say. . . . I am tempted of God; for God tempteth no man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.”—This same philosophy is put elsewhere thus:—“Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 Jn. 3: 4). “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4: 17). “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin.” (Jn. 9: 41). “Sin is not reckoned” (accounted to be sin) “where there is no law” (above v. 13).

Returning to our main question—the law of connection between the sin of Adam and the sin of his race, considered as involved in the words of v. 19—“*were made sinners*,” I have two things to say:—

(a) There is not the least occasion to put such emphasis and force into the word “*made*” as must over-ride all that the Bible elsewhere affirms as to human sinning, man's responsibility in all sin, the necessary and assumed presence of light and of law in order to the existence of sin etc., for the case demands nothing more than the proper sense of the word *became*—became as a consequence, without further defining the law of connection. The great

argument of Paul in this extended analogy between Adam and Christ did not by any means require a law of connection here that must over-ride all which the scriptures every where assume in regard to the nature of sin. It was not necessary to his purpose to show that God made men sinners without their own agency.

(b) If on the first side of this great analogy we demand the law of resistless connection between Adam's sin and the sin and ruin of his race,—a law that over-rides human agency and responsibility, then we are bound to carry the same law over to the other side of the analogue—“many shall be made righteous”—Paul's word being the very same. Under this ruling, “the free gift [Christ's salvation] comes upon all (v. 18) unto justification of life”—comes by resistless connection and inevitable consequence; comes without the active agency of sinful men;—and so we have universal salvation under a law of necessity.

4. A remark may be due on v. 20 to prevent possible misapprehension. In the words—“The law entered that the offence might abound,” we must understand by “law” the written law given through Moses, for this is the only law which can be said to have “entered”—the law of the human reason and conscience having had no historic *entrance*—no coming in at any historic period—it being coeval with man as a rational being. This allusion to the entrance of the law looks back to v. 13, 14.—The point specially liable to misapprehension is this: Did God send that law by Moses *in order that—to the end that* sin might the more abound; or only, with the result of its more abounding *i.e.* Was the greater sin the thing aimed at, or was it only the incidental result?—I judge that the nature of the case not only justifies but compels us to the second alternative—that the greater sin was not the end sought, but the result that followed incidentally. Then God met it with his over-ruling agencies and made grace superabound, all the more by means of that greater light and greater sin.

5. It only remains to say briefly that the objects Paul had in view in this extended analogy between Adam and Christ are obvious and quite too important to be overlooked.

The whole passage sets forth the reign of grace over against the reign of sin and death, as shown by putting in antithesis the one man Christ and the one man Adam.

Christ and his work are shown to be the greater, the richer, the more glorious—in the following special points :—(1) The gift of grace by Christ *abounds* (v. 15);—(2) Christ's work begins with blotting out the *many sins* of each pardoned soul; while the sin of the race began with the *one sin* of Adam (v. 16);—(3) On the side of Christ is *abundance* of grace and *abundance* of the free gift of righteousness (v. 17);—

(6) Where sin abounded, grace superabounded (v. 20).

All these richer and higher things on the side of Christ and his grace are made to bear on the point from which Paul started (v. 11), *viz.* that we have joy in God even to exultation through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have the reconciliation to God the Father. Grace is more prolific and overflowing than mere justice. Justice moves within prescribed limits, and has no overflow; but grace—divine mercy—when provision has been made (as in Christ) for its morally safe exercise—delights to pour forth its affluence without limit or measure! And in this let all men rejoice with exceeding great joy!



CHAPTER VI.

THE one theme of this chapter is a protest against abusing free grace into licence for sin—this protest bearing against two forms of this abuse :—(a) “ Shall we sin that grace may abound ? ” (v. 1–13), and (b). “ Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace ? ” (v. 14–23).

Paul assumes that all who are *in Christ* are thereby morally dead to sin (v. 2); committed, pledged, to this death unto sin by their baptism into Christ (v. 3); which, honestly done, issues in rising with him into a new life unto holiness (v. 4); the analogy of dying to sin further explained (v. 5–7); dying with Christ and living with and unto him still expanded (v. 8–13); not under law but under grace—the fact and its bearings (v. 14–16); the facts in their case and the fruits thereof (v. 17–23).

1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Paul knows his Pharisaic reader very thoroughly and readily anticipates his cavilling abuse of the doctrine (v. 5—20)—“Where sin abounded grace has superabounded.” “Let us sin, then, that there may be the more grace! Why not? Is not grace a good thing—the very thing you extol so highly?”—Paul devotes v. 2—13, to his specific answer to this cavil; and then v. 14—23 to a very similar Pharisaic cavil;—“Let us sin because we are not under the law, but under grace.”

2. God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

The English reader should know that Paul is entirely innocent of using the name of God for the sake of emphasis. He would never take the name of God in vain. All he said here was—*Let it not be!* Abhorred be the very thought!

In (v. 2.) Paul uses not the common but the special relative pronoun [“we *that*”] in this pregnant sense:—we being such as have died to sin,—inasmuch as, by our solemn profession, we have renounced sin forever, how shall *such* men live any longer in sin?

In order to understand Paul’s admirable reply to this cavil, it is entirely vital that we reach the true and full sense of a group of expressions which appear first in this chapter, all based upon an analogy which was Paul’s special delight—*viz.* the analogy between Christ’s dying for sin once for all; then rising to a new, glorious, heavenly life—this on the one hand;—and on the other, his people dying to sin, going into their graves with Christ; and then rising again by Christ’s resurrection power to a new spiritual life unto Christ. Under this analogy we have various phrases to represent the christian’s side of it;—“dead to sin”—“baptized into Christ’s death” (v. 3); “buried with him

unto death" (v. 4.) "walking in newness of life" as Christ did after being raised from the dead; "our old man crucified with him that the body of sin may be destroyed" (v. 6.); "dead with Christ" (v. 8.). "Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God" etc., (v. 11.) In Col., 2 and 3 Paul again builds a powerful argument and appeal upon this same great analogy;—"Buried with Christ;" "risen with him;" "dead in your sins, but made alive together with him," "dead with Christ." So that ye are to be thought of as "not living in the world," (Col. 2 : 24.) "risen with Christ, and therefore bound to seek those things which are above, in heaven" (Col. 3 : 1.) "dead and your life hid with Christ in God." (3:3).

It hardly need be said, (and yet it does need saying) that on the Christian side of this great analogy, every thing is spiritual—all is to be taken in the moral spiritual sense only. They do not die out of the world in the physical sense, but only in the spiritual: they are not buried with Christ either in a watery grave, or, in his rock-hewn sepulcher, but only in the spiritual sense of going out of this world of sensual loves and delights by utterly renouncing all those things for the sake of Christ and through their supreme devotion to his love and his will.—If we will put into the term "world" the idea of sensuality, lust, selfishness,—that whole group of interests, pursuits, ambitions, indulgences of appetite and passion which unregenerate souls live in and live for, we shall be able to understand Paul's sense of dying to the "world;" being dead to the world, that we may live the new life unto God.

We may safely assume that Paul loved this analogy and used it the more freely because it suggested—or perhaps we might better say—carried in and with itself, the fact that a glorious moral power comes forth from the Saviour's dying for us to persuade us in like manner to die to sin and to all worldliness *for him*; and also again, a sublime moral power from his resurrection to inspire his people to rise with him to their new and glorious spiritual life. Here we may say, are two distinct lines of moral power;—(a.) The inspiration of his example, also of the living hope that we shall soon rise to our glorious immortality as he to his;—and (b.) The fact that the same divine Spirit who raised him from the dead, raises his people also to their new spiritual life.

Let us emphasize yet again the point that on the Christian side, this death is purely and only *spiritual*. It is voluntary, a self-crucifixion, a willing, consenting death.

Hence Paul has it (v. 11.)—“*Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God.*” It is a thing of your own will; it turns upon your accounting yourselves to be divorced, shut off, from all earthliness, worldliness; and on this basis (as we shall see) Paul exhorts—“*Let not sin reign in your mortal body;*” “yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield them,” (by dint of your own will and by help of God’s grace) “as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

For the purpose of a more full exposition of vs. 2–5, it is now in place to study the phrase “*baptized into Christ.*”—Let it be carefully noted that “baptized into Christ,” and “baptized into the *name* of Christ,” are equivalents for the same idea. Our authorized version misleads some to suppose that when the minister says—“I baptize thee *in* the name of Christ,” he means—*in behalf of Christ*, acting for him and in his name. This mistake is radical, and therefore exceedingly unfortunate. The translation should be—Baptize *into the name*; and this is precisely the same as baptize into Christ himself;—which means, being brought by baptism into special relations to Christ—brought into his family, into his service, into most perfect communion and fellowship with him. Baptism is the christian rite of initiation, analogous to the sacred oath by which the soldier gives himself to the army-service of his country for life or death. It signifies and carries in itself the supreme consecration of himself to Christ. Such consecration is the meaning of baptism. By it the baptized are brought *into Christ*. Thenceforward they are no longer *out of Christ* but *in him*—in him by consecration, in him by love and trust, through most sacred and solemn vows.

Now if the reader will fasten in his mind this sense of the phrase, “*baptized into,*” he will understand those Scriptures which say,—“Our fathers were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor. 10:1, 2); “Were ye baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God, I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius;—lest any should say I baptized into my own name”—binding them to be *my* disciples rather than the disciples of Christ (1 Cor. 1:13—

15).—The passage (Acts 19 : 3) is slightly obscured by “unto” instead of *into*. “Unto what then were ye baptized ?”—which should have been—*Into* what (whom ?) then were ye baptized?—The special authority for Christian baptism—“Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name,” etc., ought certainly to have been translated—“*into* the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost”—in the sense—brought by their baptism into most solemn, momentous relations to the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—This makes plain those words of Paul (1 Cor. 12 : 13) : “For by one Spirit are we all baptized *into* one body.”—one church. This also puts into sunlight Paul’s words to the Galatians (3 : 27) : “As many as have been *baptized into Christ* have put on Christ.”

Coming now to the passage before us here, we have the sense of it unmistakably. “So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ;” i. e., we were solemnly committed, pledged, sworn to follow Him into a real death to sin, an utter renunciation of earthliness, worldliness—even as dead men have done with earth, and even as Christ also died to earth when he gave up his life on the cross.

Carrying out still further this great analogy between the Christian and his dying Saviour, Paul says : Therefore we go with Christ into the grave, not only dead with him, but *buried* also ; and all this to the end and result that we may rise also with him into that new life, so like Christ’s new life in heaven. We too are raised from our graves in a manner analogous to Christ’s resurrection, that as He was raised from death by the Father’s glorious power, so the same glorious power, working spiritually, and energizing within our souls, wakes us from death to walk before God in the new Christian life. This, beyond question, is the meaning of these verses (3, 4).—We shall see as we proceed in the chapter how Paul turns the same idea over and over, putting it in new terms, changing the words but not the sense, as if he meant to make sure of being correctly and fully understood.

On the phrase—“Buried with him by baptism unto death,” a side question is certain to be sprung in the minds of many readers, and therefore no commentator can excuse himself from giving it his attention. The ques-

tion is in substance this :—Does not this allusion to *burial by baptism* assume and mean *immersion*, and therefore prove that immersion was the primitive mode?

I have treated this question somewhat fully in my notes on Col. 2:12; but it should be considered here also.

I find no allusion here to the external mode of baptism and think we are precluded from finding here any reference to immersion—for the four following reasons:

1. This great analogy—dying to sin and rising to new life even as Christ died and rose again—occurs in Paul in a very large number of passages, yet in only two is there the slightest allusion to baptism (*viz.*, here and in Col. 2:12); and these are made so briefly that not a hint is given of “going down into the water” for baptism, and certainly not a word of “*coming up out*” of those waters. Now it seems to me simply incredible that if this great analogy were built upon the mode of baptism, there should be only these two very meager allusions to baptism in any sense of it, and none whatever to the last and perhaps most important half of immersion—the coming up out of the baptismal waters.

2. The mind of Paul is certainly upon the *spiritual* significance of baptism, which means, its bringing the baptized man *into Christ*—into new and immensely vital relations of service, love and trust; and therefore is *not* upon the external mode of baptism. The great and vital point of the analogy is the dying with Christ, and then being raised with Christ and living the new life for and unto him. This is equivalent to saying that this analogy is *not* built upon the mode of baptism, but *is* built upon the resemblance between the Christian’s great change from death to life, and Christ’s analogous change from his earthly life through death, unto his heavenly life.

If in reply to this it be said—Paul had both the mode of baptism and this spiritual analogy also before his mind, I have only to answer, By no means. That is utterly unnatural and virtually impossible. No clear-thinking mind (Paul’s was such) can manage and work such a double analogy. A clear, sensible analogy must rest, so far as baptism is concerned, upon either its outward significance or its inward, and not upon both at the same instant. In the case of Paul, we must say, certainly not upon the outward to the exclusion of the inward.

3. Burial is here at all because it lies naturally between death and resurrection. From death we reach the resurrection only through the grave and burial therein. It was so with Christ ; in this spiritual analogy it is so with his people. They not only die to sin—die with Christ, but they are buried also, to the end that they may rise, as he did, to their new life, analogous to his. This is the reason for burial here, and this one reason is sufficient. More than this one would be unphilosophical.

4. If Paul's thought here is upon the mode of baptism and upon immersion as this mode, then his meaning is this :—Therefore we are buried with Christ *in the baptismal waters unto death*. The immersion must be carried to the point of real death. If Paul's mind was upon the *mode*, and upon immersion as being this mode, then his words cannot possibly mean anything less than burying the man under the baptismal waters *till he is dead*. To make the burial in baptismal waters literal, and the “*unto death*” spiritual, is an outrage on all laws of just interpretation.

I do not see that anything more need be said on this point, unless it be to suggest that as Paul made small account of baptism as an external rite, but much account of its spiritual significance ; so we may legitimately infer that he could not make much account of the mere *mode* of that rite. The mode must be of even less importance than the rite itself, viewed externally.

5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his resurrection* :

6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

A new phase of the great analogy appears here, *viz. the planting of seed in the ground* ; its undergoing decomposition there ; but, as the result, reappearing in fruitage and glory. Perhaps Paul had in mind those words of his Master ;—“ Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit ” (John 12 : 24). So Paul thinks of Christ's people as being seed planted in the ground like Christ in his grave,

and then, like him, springing up in the glory of a resurrection to noblest fruitage.—“Knowing this” calls special attention to the point to be introduced. Ye ought to understand this well—that our old man of sin must needs be thoroughly crucified as Christ was on his cross, that the old sin-body may be destroyed—put utterly out of the way—so that henceforth we may serve sin no more. All the old propensities—proclivities toward sensual, sinful indulgence—must be slain.

In v. 6. we have a Greek word for “freed” (*dikaioo*), often used in the sense of “justified,” but here in the somewhat peculiar sense—set free, acquitted, absolved, made quit, *i. e.* of sin. Then under Paul’s figure, it is the dead man who is thus set free from sin, for he has passed out of the earthly sphere—out of the range of worldly influences, considerations, temptations. Happy man! to be thus emancipated from bondage to flesh! If his voluntary spiritual death has made him a free man, thoroughly dead to the powers that impel toward sin, and also alive to all the nobler impulses heavenward, how greatly should he rejoice! In v. 18 Paul uses for the same sense the common word for emancipate;—“Being emancipated from sin, ye become servants unto righteousness.”

8. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

The word “now” continues the same subject, yet by presenting a new phase of it. If we have died with Christ [if as he died *for sin*, we have died *unto sin*] we believe [reasonably] that we shall also live with him *i. e.* live the new spiritual life, even as he lives his life of glory and blessedness above.—“Knowing that Christ once raised from the dead, never dies more,—has risen above all death forever. This must be the case “for” (*gar*) as to his dying, he died in behalf of sin and sinners once for all; but as to his living, he lives henceforth unto God and for the glory of his kingdom forever more.—In the phrase (v. 10) “Christ died unto sin once,” I judge that the facts of the

case compel us to take these words—“died unto sin”—in a sense quite unlike what they have when said of his people. Christians *die unto sin* in a spiritual sense which assumes that they have been living unto and for sin, but live so no longer. But Christ never lived unto sin in that sense, and therefore cannot die unto sin in the sense which applies to their case.—Christ died for sin in the sense of making atonement for it. It was to carry out the analogy with the case of Christians that Paul is drawn into the use of the same words, leaving it to the good sense of his reader to modify their meaning to the known facts of his case.

11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The reader should notice carefully that this Christian dying and living, being of the moral sort [not physical] are determined, not by any law of nature and necessity, but by their thinking, “reckoning,” willing :—by their *accounting* it so. It is wholly a matter of their free purpose and choice—in this respect entirely unlike physical death and life which in no wise turn upon our own accounting, “reckoning” ourselves to be dead or living.—If this distinction is thoroughly considered and understood, the Apostle’s meaning will appear clear and pertinent.

12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13. Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

These verses are a logical inference from the verse preceding. Death and life, in this spiritual sense, belong to the voluntary activities of your soul. It is for you to say that sin shall not reign in your mortal body, compelling you to obey it and its damning lusts. Ye must not let it reign !—Neither surrender your bodily powers to become the instruments of sin ; but consecrate them to God as men made alive unto God from your old death in sin. Ye have said—I am to live to God forevermore ! This means—I am to be the slave of sin no more ; I am no more

to let my powers of either body or mind become instruments of unrighteousness, but only and wholly, to be instruments of righteousness unto the service of God.

Here the reader will notice that thus far in this chapter Paul is answering the question (of v. 1); “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” and that he answers it by saying—No! never! for we are dead to sin; are committed against sin by most sacred vows and obligations; are dead by voluntary renunciation to all its seductions, fascinations, attraction;—and we live unto God with our utmost strength of moral purpose. How then can we allow ourselves to sin?

In v. 2 Paul uses a special relative [for “*we that*”] in this pregnant sense:—*we being such as* have died to sin—inasmuch as, by our solemn profession, we have renounced sin forever:—how shall such men live any longer in sin?

14. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Closely connecting this verse with the preceding, Paul seems to say logically—Ye are free to give your powers unto God, for sin will [future]—will not lord it over you any longer (this should not be expected); sin will no more play the tyrant over you, because ye are not under law but under grace.—But what does this mean? In what sense of *law* can it be said—“Ye are not under law?” and by what logic does it follow that sin shall not tyrannize over men because they are not under law but under grace?

In briefest words, the answer is—In the Pharisaic sense of “*law*” and of being “under law.” Paul is reasoning with Pharisaic Jews. They were men of “*the law*.” The old Mosaic law, somewhat badly abused and over-loaded with their traditional interpretations and appendages, was their recognized rule of life; and obedience to it in their sense of obedience, was the ground of their confidence in God’s favor. That is to say—they used the law (in their way) for both sanctification and justification. By the law they would become holy men; by the law they assumed that they should be accepted before God as righteous and should inherit eternal life. They were *under law* therefore for both these great ends.

But, be it well considered, Paul is no longer a Pharisee. He does not believe in being “under law” in their sense

for either sanctification or justification. He has no faith in law (in the Pharisaic sense) as a power either to save men from their sins, or to justify them before God. As a power to save human souls from sin, he looks to grace—not to law : as a ground of justification before God, he holds to faith in Christ and not to legal righteousness—If these explanations and distinctions are thoroughly understood, we shall have no difficulty with Paul's argument in the remaining verses of this chapter, and throughout the next.

15. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

As Paul comes to speak disparagingly of the Pharisee's peculiar sense of "law," he anticipates their cavil ;—If you take us out from under law and put us under grace, you give us all the licence to sin that depraved souls can desire! Why shall we not sin now all we would—all we care to—since no law stands in our way?

Paul's first reply is an outburst of horror ;—Be it not so! How horrible the mere thought! *Should* we sin! [more accurate than *shall* we]—should we sin because under grace?—He will take occasion in the sequel to say that law in the Pharisaic sense and in the Pharisaic use of it, is utterly powerless to save the soul from sin ; but first he turns their attention to the terrible bondage of sin, under which, so long as they give the loose rein to its lusts, they are utterly enslaved. When they turn heartily to God and make themselves willing servants under him to the ends of righteousness, all is well. But they ought to know that, yielding themselves to be the bond-slaves of sin, they are in most fearful bondage, drifting toward a dreadful end!

17. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Here Paul speaks to the emancipated souls whom God has set free. The phrase—"God be thanked that ye were

the servants of sin"—will strike every reader as quite peculiar. It must be interpreted in one of the two following ways ; (a) Putting a strong emphasis upon the word "*were*" such as shall fully imply that the bondage is wholly past, and is present no longer : or, (b) Supplying the antithetic words [adversative conjunctions], *Though ye were, yet ye* are so longer. The former construction is much to be preferred.—(1) Because the word for "*were*" is made emphatic by position : and (2) The usual Greek adversative particles for the second construction are wanting, but would be here if this had been the apostle's way of putting his thought.—(3) It is always well (if possible) to avoid introducing more words into the text. Our business is rather to interpret the words we have than to bring in more and other words—a rule which obtains in every case where a fair sense can be made from the words we have.

18. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

As already suggested (on v. 7.) "free from sin" is here in the sense of real emancipation by victory over sin through grace. This being gained, it only remains that we become the willing, free-hearted servants of righteousness.

19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

This "speaking after the manner of men" seems to mean a method of obvious illustration, easily understood.

As they have been slaves to all uncleanness and to abounding growing iniquity, so now let them consecrate their powers to righteousness, unto the result of real holiness, for so long as they were bond-slaves of sin, they were entirely void of righteousness—had none of it.

What was the fruit of such a life, full of deeds they ought never to think of without shame ? Alas ! the end of such a course is only death !

22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23. For the wages of sin *is* death ; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This contrast is at once clear and full of force. The legitimate fruit of holy living—everlasting life ; but the wages of sin, death only, death wholly, death eternally ! and in character, most appalling !

The free gift of God's grace to those who live righteously, eternal life—over against that awful, everlasting death !



CHAPTER VII.

The key to this chapter, the clue to its exposition and bearing in the great argument of this epistle, is to be found in the Pharisaic idea of being under law as a system of salvation, *i. e.* as a power to do for sinful man two things :—(a.) To save his soul from sinning ; and (b.) From condemnation before God ;—*i. e.* to give him both sanctification and justification.—This discussion really starts from chap. 6. 14—“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.” Taking up this point—no more under law in the Pharisaic sense but under grace—Paul goes fundamentally into the first part—the being under law—to show (a.) That if one adopts that religious system, he must needs carry it through—work in it and under it while it remains in force upon him—illustrating this point by the law of marriage (v. 1-3) ;—next (b.) That by the dead body of Christ, the demand for the old Pharisaic law is dead, and the way is gloriously open for a new and better system—*viz.* of loving allegiance to Christ and the really redeeming, saving power of the gospel (v. 4) ; Next, (c.) That the old system is utterly

powerless as to saving souls from sin, for the law is in its nature good and has only a good intent, yet, working by itself alone, it only reveals moral obligation, and in all sin-loving souls, provokes resistance (v. 5-13);—(d.) That this law meets the approval of man's moral nature [the “*nous*”] and serves to stimulate this moral nature to resist the clamorous demands of the lower nature [the “*sark*,” flesh] but only to the result of being perpetually overcome;—for depravity being universal to the race, the flesh always holds sway over the will and overpowers the voice of the moral nature [the *nous*] every time (v. 14-23);—(e). Finally victory comes at last, through Jesus Christ our Lord (v. 24,25).

1. Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2. For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband.

3. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

The remarks above, introductory to this chapter, should be considered attentively. The reader's thought should be held closely to the scope of Paul's argument —*i.e.* as made with the typical Pharisee of his age, who is “*under law*” in the sense of seeking to find in his observance of it both the power that *sanctifies* and the power that *justifies*.

To such Pharisaic Jews, Paul says—“Brethren; know ye not”—certainly ye must know (for I speak to law-knowing men)—“that the law,” (the law which you so much honor) “has dominion over the man” [who seeks salvation under it] “as long as he liveth?” Placing yourselves under law for the purposes of salvation according to your system, ye must make it a life-business, to be prosecuted as long as ye live. Manifestly nothing less than this can suffice. Take this illustration:

The married woman is bound by the marriage law to

her husband while living (literally, to her living husband), but if the husband die, she is released from the law of her husband (*i.e.* from the law which binds her to her husband). Wherefore (v. 3), if her husband being still living, she becomes another man's wife, she shall be called an adulteress (literally, she will be doing business as an adulteress—running that business as a profession, and therefore fully deserving that name). But if her husband die, she is free from that law (of marriage) so as not to be an adulteress though married to another man.

4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

This doctrine of the law of marriage, *viz.*, that the death of either party severs the bond, is perfectly clear; yet we may suppose it had a pertinence in Paul's argument quite apart from its clearness,—*viz.* in the striking analogy which it suggests between the death of the husband and the death of Christ. As the husband's dead body sunders the marriage bond and sets the wife free, so Christ's dead body frees us (all who so will) from being in the Pharisaic sense “under law” as our reliance for salvation. In this sense we become dead to the law by means of the dead body of Christ.—Of course Christ's dead body carries with it and fully signifies his incarnation, death, atonement, resurrection—all those sublime and mighty moral forces which lie in the gospel scheme. These moral forces open to us an entirely new method of salvation, and therefore at one master stroke deliver us from the old law (as used for Pharisaic righteousness) and invite us to a new marriage with the risen Christ, under which we “shall bring forth fruit unto God”—this fruit-bearing having reference to the passage (6: 22); “ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”—Thus we are married not to a dead Christ but to a Christ living, yea risen from the dead; while around his death are clustering evermore those grand moral forces in which lie the power that redeems us from sin and from its condemning curse.

5. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of

sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held ; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

The logical connection with what precedes, indicated by “for” (gar) is of this sort :—Under this new marriage relation to the risen Christ, we may hope to bring forth fruit unto holiness and God ; *for* under the old system all worked toward sin and death (v. 5) ; but now, under this new system, we serve in a new spirit, unto real fruitage to God. “The motions of sins” is more literally the *emotions* of sins—those impulses toward sinful indulgence which are stimulated rather than suppressed by law (simple authority), and which work with energy in our bodily appetites and passions unto bringing forth fruit to death. But now, under the gospel, we are freed from the law, *i.e.* from any necessity of resorting to it to use it in the Pharisaic sense for purposes of salvation. “Being dead to that under which we were held”—is the better text—instead of “that being dead wherein we were held.” All the older manuscripts concur in this improved reading. The reader will notice that this improved reading gives us the identical phraseology in which Paul so much delights—christians “dead to sin”—dead to the old Pharisaic system of salvation by works of law *etc.*

Now, therefore, being dead to that old system and to law in that sense of it and with reference to that Pharisaic use of it, we are ready to serve in a new spirit, not according to the old letter—this new spirit having for its central element and vital force the moral power of gratitude, love, new obedience to the risen Christ, our perfect and glorious Redeemer.

7. What shall we say then ? *Is* the law sin ? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law : for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shall not covet.

8. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead.

9. For I was alive without the law once : but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10. And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

11. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.

Here a new objection is sprung upon this discussion, which of course brings up a new question to be put and answered. What Paul has said of the law has seemed to imply that it is not only powerless to save the soul from sinning, but worse yet ;—is even provoking men to greater transgression.—What then shall we say of it ? Is the law sin ? Is it a bad, pernicious thing, a positive power unto wickedness and truly responsible for the sins of men ? Never let this be said !

How then does Paul explain himself ? On this wise ;—(1.) The law gives me a deeper, truer knowledge of sin. For indeed I should have had no just sense of sin but for the law. To be yet more particular, I should not even have thought of lust as a sin, if the law had not said to me—“Thou shall not covet.”—(2.) The law stirred up my selfish heart to resist its demands. In this sense it took occasion by its specific commands to work in me all sorts of lust—all sinful passions. I would not brook control ; I could not endure that authority which forbade me the indulgence of my propensities. But this was through no fault in the law ; it was wholly through fault in myself.—(3.) Notice that *apart from law*, in the absence of its authority—sin, in this particular aspect of it, was dead ;—at least its impulses lay dormant ; no exciting cause roused them into activity. In fact before the law came to act upon me I was alive with hope ; I had a very comfortable opinion of myself ;—but when the commandment came, sin sprang into life and activity ; I died, in the sense that my hopes vanished. I saw in myself sins I had not dreamed of before.—This is no strange fact of human experience. It needs no great amount of genuine conviction of sin under a clear perception of God’s law to throw the human soul into the agony of despair.—So much good the law wrought for me. The commandment which God gave as a means unto life, I have found to be in my case unto death. It seemed to ring out the death-knell of doom for my guilty

soul. Then v. 11 repeats the points made in v. 8 with slight variations. In the same sense here as there “sin takes occasion by the commandment”—sin being here as there the overmastering proclivity toward self-indulgence, despite of God’s authority—the imperial demands of lust in the depraved, unsubdued heart of man. This sin-power in the soul took occasion by the commandment to *deceive*, and then to *kill* him ;—to deceive first, in the sense of making it seem almost right to resist God’s prohibition of self-indulgence—moreover putting the reasons for resisting God’s authority in strangely fascinating forms and so bewitching the soul into deeper and more mad rebellion. This again is a terrible fact in the experience of many a human soul under its first clear apprehensions of God’s law as forbidding long cherished sin. “And by it slew me”—for my fond but blind hopes of being in a sort right before God went down with a crash before these appalling revelations of my own wickedness of heart.—Thus Paul shows that the law working conviction of sin in his soul, had done him most valuable service.

12. Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good: that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

Wherefore it is hereby shown that the law is holy (pure in every demand)—just (intrinsically right)—and good, beneficent and only so in its spirit and in its normal influence. How is this then? Does “that good thing” (the law which you so strongly commend) “become death to me”?—Never let that be said!—But this is the case: “The sin” (not the law properly, but the sin in me which the law (innocently as to itself) stirred into such activity—that did the mischief ;—that wrought in me the real death).—In this construction I assume that the words, “But sin,” are Paul’s answer to the question—Was that good thing made death to me? Not at all he answers,—“but sin” was. Sin was made death to me. And then Paul’s thought rushes on to give the reason and show the purpose of God in permitting sin to work out such results in the convicted soul of man. It was that sin might mani-

fest itself, working death in me by that good thing (the law,) that thus by means of the commandment sin might become an exceedingly great sinner—that is, might show itself to be an awfully guilty thing—a power of intense depravity in human souls; a spirit of rebellion against what is infinitely holy, just and good. In the last clause of v. 13. our version should not be taken to mean that by the commandment sin might *become* more sinful than it would otherwise be; but rather that it might be *shown* to be more sinful—that its awfully guilty character might be more thoroughly brought to light.

Let me here call the reader's special attention to certain features in Paul's *manner* of putting things in this discussion.

In v. 5, 6, Paul says "we," and carries on the discussion, including his readers with himself as subjects of the experience to which he appeals.—In a different way in vs. 7–13, he regularly has the first person "I;" "me."—Another point to be noted is that here his verbs are all in the past, historic tense. That is, while he seems to be speaking of his own experience, it is not of the *present*, but of the *past*. He is telling us how the law broke in upon his old Pharisaic life—flashed upon his dark soul some rays of true spiritual light as to the nature of God's law; gave him convictions of personal guilt never felt before; and thus smote down his Pharisaic hopes. There seems to be no fair way to treat his words save to apply them to his own personal experience: but this experience is certainly that of his past Pharisaic life and not of his then present Christian life. Every verb, every clause, is of the past, not of the present.—As we proceed onward from v. 14. we notice a sudden and total change in the tense [*time*] of the things he affirms.

14. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

This very peculiar, extraordinary, yet exceedingly important passage (v. 14–25) should receive careful attention. One of its very peculiar features is the usage of the “I” [ego], and in the present tense throughout—apparently (at the merely superficial view) as if Paul were giving his then present experience. A closer view will show that this is utterly impossible—not for one moment supposable. [The arguments to prove this will be given hereafter]. Suffice it to say now that Paul’s use of “I” [ego] here is not historical but is rhetorical ;—being used not to represent his then present experience, but the universal experience of man as a depraved being, having no other spiritual help toward virtue except law. By “rhetorical” I mean only, a clear and forcible way of presenting the real and vital facts of the case.

It may conduce toward a clear presentation of the points put here to retranslate the passage with occasional explanations interspersed, thus :

(V. 14). For we all know [in our inner consciousness] that the law is spiritual. [purely excellent], but I [fallen and depraved] am fleshly [as opposed to “spiritual”], with the strongest proclivities toward sensual indulgence [the vital sin-force in fallen man], and am really sold into the bondage of a slave under this sin-power.—(v. 15) ; For what I am doing I do not approve ; for I do not what I would, but I actually do what I hate [*i. e.*, would not].—(v. 16). Now if I do what I would not, I speak with and for the law—endorsing it as good.—(v. 17). But now [things being so] no longer am I precisely the doer, but the indwelling sin in me [is the doer]. That is to say, the *whole* of my being, represented here by “I,” does not enter into this doing ; it is rather the indwelling sin which lives in and controls my lower fleshly nature.

The thoughtful reader will observe that Paul’s way of putting these points is rather the loosely popular than the closely metaphysical. It is what we may call the surface-view of human, sinning experience. Even the heathen, when his long dormant moral consciousness first wakes into activity, turning his eye inward and beginning to take note of his inner moral being, will tell you there are two egos, two distinct selfs there—one pleading for the right ; the other for the wrong : one witnessing for God and virtue ; the other clamoring for the old sinful indulgences.

His first lesson in moral distinctions gives him a dual personality in his own soul. He must think there are two distinct voices, that seem to speak for two very distinct and even opposite entities within.

The heathen classics abound in expressions very much like these of Paul. Who can say but he may have read some of them?—Xenophon (*Cyrop.* 6 : 1) puts these words into the mouth of Araspes:—"Certainly I must have two souls, for plainly it is not one and the same which is both evil and good, nor which loves both honorable conduct and base, and wishes at the same time to do a thing and not to do it. Plainly then there are two souls; for when the good one prevails, then it does good; and when the evil one predominates, then it does evil."—Epictetus says:—"The sinning one does not what he would, but does what he would not."—Ovid: "Desire persuades one way; *mens* (the *mind* in the sense of man's higher moral nature), persuades another way. I see and approve the better; I follow the worse."—Seneca: "I testify to you that I am unwilling to do what I will," [“*hoc quod volo, me nolle*”].—Lactantius, a Christian writer, represents a heathen as saying: "I indeed *will* not to sin, but I am overcome, for I am clothed with frail flesh. Therefore I am led about in all uncertainties, and I sin, not because I will it, but because I am compelled."

So the man of strong drink will tell you he is thoroughly conscious of two elements or forces within himself—the one of the lower nature; the other, of the higher. The one cries—Indulge; give; give:—the other remonstrates—Abstain; be a whole man, and not a beast.

Turning back to note more carefully the words (v. 15) "I allow not," (Gr. *ginōskō*) I remark that some critics take this word in its primary, usual sense—*know*; while others sustain the Auth. Version in the sense—allow; approve. The former insist that this word never has and never can have the sense, *allow*; the latter defend this sense as sustained by the usage of the corresponding Hebrew word.—The latter view is strongly supported by the context—*i. e.*, by the logical inference which Paul draws:—I do not approve of what I really seem to do; for it is not what I would that I do, but what I would not. This shows Paul's meaning to be—I do not approve of what I really do.

On the other hand, there is no indication throughout this passage that Paul meant to say—I am not conscious of what I am about ; I do things not knowing what I do. This would bring into the discussion an entirely new element—that of unconscious doings—which, I take it, is altogether foreign from Paul's argument.

18. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

19. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

In the last clause of v. 18, all the older manuscript authorities omit the words, “I find not.”

I translate [with paraphrase]—thus : (v. 18) ; “For I know [consciously] that good dwells not in me, *i. e.*, in my flesh [in the lower nature]; for the *would*—the *wishing*, is present to me,—lies very near me ; often present to my consciousness ; but the actual *doing* of the good is not—*i. e.*, is not thus near, with, and present to me.—(v. 19). For I do not the good I would ; but I do the bad I would not ;—*i. e.*, my actual doing is the bad I would not, and not the good I would—every time.—(v. 20). But if I do that which I would not, the doer is no longer I [the ego], but is the sin dwelling in me. That is to say—The voice within me which *would not*, which protests against the doing—is at least a *part* of the *ego*, the real *I*; and in so far, exempts the ego from the responsibility of the doing, and consequently thus far, throws the responsibility upon the indwelling sin.—(v. 21) I find then a law (in the sense of a fixed usage, a constant result), that when I would do good, the bad is ever present to me.

If any reader would call the Apostle to account on the charge of loose metaphysics, he would probably reply:—I am not treating this subject metaphysically just now. I speak to the common mind, from the testimony of universal human experience. There is a certain sin-power in human flesh, which every observing man knows of full well ; and

he also knows that his reason and conscience—the higher, nobler elements of his moral nature—give battle to this lower-seated sin-power—yet only to be worsted in every conflict, till some other help comes to his aid besides mere law.

As to Paul's use of the word “would,” (Gr. *thelo*) which occurs seven times in the passage (15–21) I doubt if it can be represented in English better than by “*would*.” It is not *will* in the strong sense of purpose, determination ; but rather indicates *desire*, and here not the lower appetites but the higher impulses—those of our moral nature—the voice of conscience and of reason.

22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

In these verses the dual personality stands out with even greater distinctness, (if possible), and noticeably, these dual persons appear under new names. The better part of man's moral nature is here “the inner man ;” also “the law of my mind” [nous, the “mens of Ovid as quoted above.”] Over against this power is that of the lower nature, called “another law in my members ;” also “the law of sin which is in my members ;” and further on, “the body of this death.”—Here Paul says (v. 22.)—“I am pleased with the law of God”—that is the I [ego] which represents the inner man, so called because the outer man is of the flesh, visible to the eye ; while the reason and conscience are of man's inner invisible being. The voice of the inner man is in harmony with the law of God, approving the right.—But I see another law in my members [my flesh] which always puts itself in hostile array, doing battle against the law of my reason and conscience, [nons] and always enslaving me (making me a captive of war) under the law of sin which is in my members (flesh).—This is the same conflict, put in military terms—the same irrepressible antagonism between the higher and the lower elements of man's being. Noticeably here, as throughout this chapter, the lower is always the conqueror ; the higher is beaten in every conflict.

24. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?

25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Suddenly Paul's description culminates in one outburst of agony—“ O wretched man I ! Who shall deliver me—who can ever deliver me from the body of this death ! —from this power of the flesh, this all-conquering sin-power of my lower nature ; which always enslaves—against which, so long as only law stands for my help, I struggle forever in vain !

Here light breaks gloriously upon his darkness ; help drops down from on high, and his out-poured thanksgivings bear witness to his inexpressible relief and triumph.—“ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord ! The great Deliverer of human souls from their sin-bondage has come at last !

Then as the conclusion of this chapter's discussion,—“ I myself with the mind [the nous] serve the law of God—endorsing, approving it ;—but with the flesh [the sarx], the law of sin—the flesh always carrying the day against the mind till God's help in Christ appears.

We must now give attention briefly to the long mooted question—whether in this passage (v. 14—25.) Paul is speaking of Christian experience, and particularly of his own then present experience as a christian.

This question must certainly be answered *in the negative*; for the four following reasons—each strong in itself; all combined sufficient to annihilate that mischievous interpretation forever.

I. The whole scope of the context forbids its reference to Christian experience.

The thought of the context should be traced even from 6: 14 : “ Sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under law, but under grace ;”—not “ under law ” specially as a *sanctifying power*, because it is utterly inadequate for this purpose.—Then in 7: 4 and onward we have the same argument still in hand—the law good, excellent in itself, but rather provoking more sin than itself subduing sin and producing holy obedience ;—and then to make his argument demonstrably clear, he outlines in this

passage the life and death-struggle between the higher and the lower nature in the unrenewed man, with no other help toward virtue except the law. Man's better elements (reason and conscience) approve the law of God and have its help in their moral efforts ; but even so, are entirely unavailing. Throughout it is vital to Paul's entire argument that this struggle be that of the unregenerate man, with the law only and no gospel present for the help of his better nature ; but this help from the law, all too weak for the victory.

2. The conflict so vividly portrayed throughout this passage is beyond all question between the *flesh* and the *mind* (the “*sarx*” and the “*nous*,”—*i.e.* the lower appetites and passions, having their seat mainly in the flesh on the one hand ; and on the other, the higher elements—those of “the inner man ;” his nobler qualities as a moral being. The element always present in all Christian experience *viz.* the *Spirit of God*, is not once alluded to—is not even thought of throughout this entire passage. This fact alone is perfectly decisive against the theory that this is Christian experience. For there never can be any Christian experience without the presence of the Spirit of God. The “*pneuma*,”—the “*Holy Ghost*”—is a present element, a living power, in all Christian experience. The Christian life cannot even begin without it ; can never be carried forward, when once begun, without it. So Paul teaches in this very connection : “Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,” [*i.e.* dwelling within him] “he is none of his.” Or read Paul (as in Gal. 5: 16–24) and mark how in all Christian experience the conflict is not (as here) between “flesh” and “mind,” but between the flesh and the Spirit: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh ; and these are contrary the one to the other ;”—between these all the antagonism of really Christian experience lies.—The utter absence of the Spirit in this experience drawn out in Romans 7. ought to have shown it forever impossible that this can be the regenerate, Christian man—with no Holy Ghost in his heart and none of his power in the soul.—This is all unknown to the scriptures —is an utter impossibility!—When in chap. 8. Paul comes to expand his views of the glorious *victory* for which he thanks

God in the close of this chapter, he shows how thoroughly he recognizes this victory as coming through the presence of the Spirit and how certainly he ascribes it to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus that he is made free from the law of sin and death.

3. The present tense here (as said above) is not *historical* but is *rhetorical*. It does not delineate his own personal experience at that time, nor indeed specially *at* any time, but it makes himself a *supposed case*—a case for the illustration of a great law of sinning human nature. Here I call the reader's attention to the fact that Paul uses the Greek tongue with great accuracy. In quite a number of passages he does refer to his experience in his pre-christian life—before his conversion ; but never in the present tense —never in any other than the proper historic past. See Acts 22: 3, 4, 19, 20: “I was brought up in this city ; was taught in the law of the fathers ; was zealous toward God. I persecuted this sect ; and imprisoned and beat them *etc.* —all with perfect accuracy, in the really past, historic tense. So Acts 26: 9–15; “I verily thought with myself that I ought.” See also Phil. 3: 4–7 ; “I was circumcised the eighth day ;” “what things were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ.” Thus Paul knew how to speak of his ungodly experience, of the life he lived before his conversion, using sensibly the right historic tenses.—From this we must certainly infer that this passage (v. 14–25), running regularly in the present tense, was not, could not be, his experience *before* his conversion. That is, he is not reciting it *as such*. With equal certainty it was not his experience in any part of his *christian* life—because as here put there is no Holy Ghost in it, and no victory over sin in a single instance—nothing but being overcome in every struggle. This present tense is therefore nothing but a supposed case of a soul—withouth the gospel and without the Holy Ghost.

4. Finally ; throughout this delineation (v. 14–25) sin absolutely triumphs in every conflict. It conquers every-time. Is this a *christian* experience ? Alas if it be, for a sinner's experience can be no worse ! There is no salvation in this sort of christian expericence ; no victory over sin whatever. Whatever grace there may be here is powerless ; indeed (as already said) so powerless that the passage contains not the slightest allusion to any grace whatever in

the struggle. But, be it carefully noted, Paul has already spoken of the really christian experience on this point ; *viz.*, in 6: 14–22. “For sin shall not have dominion over you” (how utterly unlike this conflict !) “for ye are not under law but under grace.”—“But now, being made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” This is a totally different experience from what we have in Rom. 7. So also as we shall see throughout Rom. 8. The real christian experience is there—the Spirit of God ; the life-giving, the sin-conquering power.

Therefore, let the notion that Rom. 7, gives christian experience be forever exploded. It has been a terrible delusion, encouraging multitudes of unconverted men in the belief that because their own experience was quite well drawn out there, they at least belonged to one class of Paul’s christian people—as good as Paul himself during at least one stage of his christian life !



CHAPTER VIII.

THIS chapter throughout stands over against chap. 7, in closest antithetic relations ; *that* giving us the inefficiency of the law to save human souls from sin and consequently from condemnation : this, on the other side, giving us the perfect efficiency of the gospel scheme, especially through its glorious power of the Spirit. Here Paul catalogues the blessings which come to believers in Christ through the Holy Ghost. We shall find it a wonderfully rich group of blessings :—No more condemnation upon those in Christ, walking no longer after the flesh but after the Spirit (v. 1, 2), God having achieved through his Son what the law never could do (v. 3, 4) ; changing the whole heart and life from loving and serving flesh to the spiritual mind which is life and peace (v. 5–8) ; results wrought by the indwelling presence of Christ and his Spirit (v. 9–11) ; which should bind christians morally to live no more after the flesh but to follow the Spirit as sons of God, and so heirs of glory (v. 12–17) ; a glory great

beyond compare (v. 18)—toward which glory the whole creation looks with longing hope (v. 19–25); the Spirit helping toward hope by inspiring our prayers (v. 26, 27); confidence in God's love as built upon his eternal purpose (v. 28–30); God *for us* should inspire our faith and hope for every blessing (v. 31–34); nothing can separate us from Christ's love (v. 35–39).

1. There *is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

“No condemnation”—for be it carefully observed, Paul has said and shown that being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (5 : 1), so that to those who are in Christ there is no more condemnation before and under God's law. It only remained to show here that the conscious self-condemnation, resulting from present sin, has ceased in the case of those who walk no longer after the flesh but after the Spirit. They are free, for the law of the spirit that works life has lifted them out from the bondage of slavery under the law that wrought sin and death.—The “law” is used here as above (7 : 21, 23, 25), in the sense of a well defined *power*, acting efficiently and constantly—the law of sin to produce sinning, and the law of life and grace, to beget holiness. In v. 2. therefore Paul teaches that the Spirit of God delivers the soul from the power of sin and death.—The reader should note the full assumption here that the state of “no condemnation” presupposes not only free pardon—actual justification before the law—but deliverance from reigning sin also—the real saving of human souls from its present dominion. This great fact cannot be too thoroughly understood, or too deeply impressed.—In v. 2. the improved text has “*thee*” instead of “*me*.”

These verses should not be passed without special attention to the agency ascribed to Christ (as well as to that ascribed to the Spirit)—the blessing being limited to those who are *in Christ Jesus*.—In v. 2. the true relation (to other words) of the clause—“*in Christ Jesus*,” should be carefully noted. Our auth. version will naturally (but in-

correctly) be understood to connect it to the words “spirit of life.” It should rather qualify “*made free*”—thus: “For the law of the spirit of life hath made thee—being in Christ Jesus—free from the law of sin and death.—Or the two verses might be translated thus:—“There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. *For in Christ Jesus* the law of the spirit of life hath made thee free from the law of sin and death.—Thus v. 2 gives a reason for the fact stated in v. 1. Both alike speak of those who are *in Christ Jesus*.

3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

It happens not unfrequently that Paul’s specially important passages are specially difficult of construction—a fact due apparently to the deep, impetuous emotions which they excited in his mind. These verses are a case in point. They need to be studied very carefully and with the closest attention to the drift and demands of the context in order to obtain any well grounded satisfaction as to their precise significance.

Manifestly he wishes to show how it comes to pass that the law of the spirit of life in Christ has made thee free from the law of sin. We know this to be his object, not only by the previous context but also by the following—as we shall see.

To put in plainest light both the grammatical construction and the full significance of v. 3, we may paraphrase thus;—For as to that result, impossible for the law because it was weak through the flesh, God having sent his own Son in flesh like man’s flesh of sin and *for* sin (*i. e.* for the sake of overcoming sin) has condemned sin (sealing its death-warrant and triumphing over it) in the incarnate flesh of his Son ;—(*v. 4.*) to the end that the righteous demands of the law might be fulfilled in and by us (in our renewed life)—in the case of us all who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

The first clause—"what the law could not do"—is literally—the thing impossible of law—*i. e.* impossible for law to do. Some critics construct it with some verb understood, having the sense, effect, accomplish. But the introduction of new words should be avoided if possible. Other critics, more wisely, take it for a nominative independent, and suppose that Paul puts what he had to say about this result, impossible to mere law, into the next verb "condemned"—this verb being chosen here with some reference to the same word in v. 1. and a sort of play upon that "no condemnation." There is no condemnation to those who so walk (as in v. 1.) because, though the law could not break that awful power of sin in the flesh, yet God, by sending his Son to become incarnate, has perfectly smitten that power, condemned it so utterly that now all the righteous claims of moral law on human souls may be amply met in the case of those who walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh.

That victory over sin is impossible to mere law because the power of sin in human flesh is too strong for it, is the great doctrine of chap. 7. On the other hand the great doctrine of chap. 8. is that what law could not do, the Spirit of God has well and thoroughly done—and done it in connection with the mission of God's own Son, made incarnate in human flesh.—Noticeably Paul does not say that the Son was sent in man's sinful flesh, but only in a flesh which *resembled* this flesh of sin. It was human but not sinful—human in all points but the sin.

The precise sense and relation of the words "and for sin," before "condemned" are points of some critical difficulty. Our auth. version assumes that this "and" connects the verb "condemned" with the participle "sending;" but this is harsh. I have chosen to connect it with the word "sin" which in Paul's Greek stands immediately before it—thus; Having sent his Son in a likeness of flesh of sin and for sin—*i. e.* he sent his Son both under the form of man's sinful flesh and for the sake of conquering this sin.

The critics would readily agree to read—"condemned the sin which is in human flesh"—if Paul had put the article after the word "sin," giving the phrase this sense—*the* sin which is in human flesh;—but he did not. Therefore it seems better to connect "in the flesh"—with "con-

demned,” to indicate that it was by the incarnation of the Son that this victory over sin was wrought.

In v. 4., “the righteousness of the law” must certainly be the subjective, ethical righteousness of a right heart and life. This is the proper sense of Paul’s word (*dikaioma*) in such a connection (*e. g.* in Rom. 2 : 26.)

Paul’s choice of his Greek negative before “walk after the flesh” is significant—it having this shade of thought—*They being supposed* not to walk after *etc.*—*i. e. on condition* that they walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Finally, let it be said emphatically that the current of thought throughout this passage is not upon justification by faith in the sense of pardon for sin; nor upon any sort of “imputed righteousness”; but is upon the deliverance of human souls from the presence and dominion of sin as a reigning power in their flesh—their depraved nature—a deliverance achieved in consequence of Christ’s incarnation in human flesh—and specially through the agencies of the Holy Ghost.

5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6. For to be carnally minded *is* death: but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

These verses have one object and one only—*viz.* to show what is meant by walking after the flesh and after the Spirit respectively; how they are squarely opposed to each other—the former against God and unto death; and the latter, for God, after God, and unto life.

They who live according to (or after) flesh, giving mind and heart, thought and affection, to things of flesh, care for those things supremely; give to them their hearts’ love, and seek their happiness therein.—Over against this, those who receive the Spirit of God into their heart love the things of that Spirit; seek and love purity, obedience, God’s worship and service—a state of heart and course of

life totally opposite to living after the flesh.—Then (in v. 6) the minding of the flesh is death—in its tendencies and in its certain results ; while the minding of the Spirit is life and peace.—This must be so (v. 7) because the minding of the flesh is enmity against God—precisely this ; it is rebellion against his authority ; it is hostile to God, in every element and feature for it does not subject itself to the law of God and never can. God's law demands a totally different heart and life in the strongest contrast with this. Then (v. 8) they who are in the flesh, —living in it, choosing to follow its impulses and be governed by its behests—“cannot please God.” Nothing can be more demonstrably certain than this. There is nothing in this character that can please God. God would have his moral creatures hold the flesh under the control of right and reason. Every impulse toward sinful indulgence ; all that is of the flesh as a sin-power—He would have them withstand utterly and supplant it by the force of a stronger affection—the love of God and the spirit of obedience to his will.

9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10. And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin ; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

If indeed (as is now assumed) the Spirit of God dwell in you, then ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. If any one has not the Spirit of Christ dwelling within him, he is not Christ's disciple—belongs not to Christ at all—a truth of immensely vital bearings.—If the question be raised here whether we shall take the words—“the Spirit of Christ” to mean the Holy Ghost given by Christ, or the character of Christ, in the sense of a spirit—a state of heart —like Christ's, the former view must be the true one, as the context shows.—Remarkably we have in these three verses four synonymous titles or names for the indwelling Holy Ghost, *viz.* “The Spirit of God” ; “the Spirit of Christ” ;

“Christ” himself ; and “the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead.”—In v. 10 the death of the body is that universal mortality which comes upon the race by reason of sin ;—over against which the divine Spirit gives us the resurrection-life because of righteousness—*i. e.* because we have become righteous. The same energizing Spirit which raised Christ from the dead will also raise his people from their graves and clothe them with the same immortality.

12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Therefore we are under no sort of obligation to the flesh to live after its low, base impulses. For it has no righteous claim upon us ; it pays us only with death ! It is only by resisting unto death the impulses of fleshly lust that ye can have life. But doing this by the aid of the Spirit and according to its leading, ye shall live.—Thus God sets before men the way of death and the way of life, and devolves upon every man the responsibility of choice. So Paul has put the case also in Gal. 5 : 16–24.

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God :

17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

For all those who are led by the Spirit of God—those and none other, and all these without exception—are sons of God. Being led by the Spirit makes them sons. And the Spirit which they thus receive from God is not one of bondage—this negative form of statement being chosen for its greater strength. The son-spirit is not at all a spirit of bondage but of adoption, of filial confidence under which

they spontaneously cry, “Father, Father.” The Spirit of God himself witnesses conjointly with our own son-feeling that we are children of God. He inspires this feeling; He makes it more and more strong in our heart. It is no small part of his official work to breathe into our souls this child-confidence and prompt those outgoings of loving trust which voice themselves in the cry, “Father, Father.”—The word “Abba” is the Aramean (original Hebrew) word for father, coupled here with the Greek word, perhaps to suggest that in every tongue and every nation, the children of God seize the word “father” as the best expression of their humble, trustful, loving heart toward God.—“If children, then heirs”—according to the universal law—inheritance being evermore the prerogative of sonship.—“Fellow heirs with Christ,” inheriting the wealth of God even as he does and because we are in him.—If indeed we suffer with him, then shall we surely share with him in his final glory—a truth often assumed or expressed by our Lord (Luke 12: 32, and 22: 28–30.) and repeated by his apostles.

18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

“For I reckon”—this is my reasoning upon the case:—since we have this joint heirship with Christ in his immortal blessedness, I must infer that the sufferings of this short life are not worthy of a thought in the presence of that glory which is to be revealed to us. In the prospect of such glory, with the promise of it full in our view (so Paul’s words present it), all we can possibly suffer for Christ here seems infinitely small and of no appreciable worth. This is certainly a very strong logical inference from that glorious sonship and joint heirship with Christ of which he has spoken.

19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope;

21. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered

from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

This passage is difficult especially because the sentiment is new—not elsewhere brought out in the scriptures. Critics have differed widely as to its precise meaning.

Its true meaning must be found—(a.) In the legitimate sense of the central word “creature,” three times used, “and the whole creation” (v. 22.) where the Greek word is still the same as in the three other cases.—(b.) In the things said of this “creature,” which become limitations and definitions of its meaning, and especially the antithesis which distinguishes between “the creature” and “ourselves also who have the first fruits of the Spirit,” (v. 23.)—(c.) In the exigencies of the context; here, especially, the object and purpose of this allusion to the creature as groaning and travelling together in pain, waiting for the great hour of redemption for God’s people.

(a.) The Greek word for creature* means primarily creation as an *act* of God. This sense is excluded here by the nature of the case.—Secondarily, the thing created considered as something *made*—essentially what we mean by “all nature,” especially all material things, whether animate or inanimate.—Unless the limitations given in the passage forbid, we are bound to take the word in this sense.

(b.) Under the head of explanatory clauses which serve to modify and limit the meaning, we have—(1.) “The being made subject to vanity,” without its own consent, yet temporarily, and in hope of ultimate relief. “Vanity” must be a state of duresse, subjection to evil—words which well represent the state of our world since the fall and because of it. By reason of that fall, this world became marred and shorn of its paradisaical beauty and perfection, subject to storm, lightning, tornado, earthquake, miasm,

pestilence, casualty, bitter cold and scorching heat—liabilities which most manifestly adjust it to a state of sin, suffering and death. Indeed the words (v. 23.) the redemption of our *body*”—show plainly that the mortality of our flesh is prominently before Paul’s mind. This all came of sin ; it shall all pass away when God’s children shall emerge into their glorious “liberty”—exempt forevermore from this bondage of corruption.—(2.) We have the fact that from this state of duresse and bondage, it is to be delivered when the children of God attain the full revelation of that glory which awaits them. Then shall the creation itself—this world—all nature—be emancipated from its bondage to vanity and corruption, and emerge into a state corresponding and adapted to the moral purity and glorious liberty of God’s children.—(3) As if all nature were sentient and conscious of this thralldom to the sinning condition of the moral beings placed upon it, Paul represents it as groaning in travail pains for its anticipated deliverance.—If it be said that this conception of nature is a thing of the imagination, it may be admitted, yet without vitiating its propriety. Why may not all nature be thought of as in love with its own beauty and in pain for its coerced deformity ;—as therefore in sympathy with God’s intelligent children in their longings for exemption from frailty, pain and wo, and in their aspirations for a paradise unmarred by sin ?

The two points made especially prominent in this description of nature (“the creature”) are—its earnest longing for the grand consummation of blessedness promised to the children of God ; and its travail pains under its enforced subjection to its present condition of frailty and vanity.

(c.) The exigencies of the context are obvious, as we may see in the logical connection of v. 19 with v. 18,—the case of “the creature” being adduced here to confirm the certainty of that unutterable glory which is to be revealed for God’s people. So grand and glorious will be the relief from sin and frailty, from the incidents and agencies for pain and tears and wo, which pertain to this evil world, that all nature is longing and waiting for it—not merely for her own sake (we may suppose) but in sympathy with God’s redeemed people.

A few words more as to the various interpretations

which have been put upon this word “creature” and “creation” in this passage.

1. It cannot possibly mean the *redeemed* of our world, because in v. 23, “it” (or “they”) are contradistinguished from “ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit.”

2. It cannot possibly mean the *unredeemed* of our race, the incorrigibly wicked;—because (a) They are never called “the creature” or “the creation;”—(b) They would have been called “the world:”—(c) They were never “subjected to vanity” unwillingly, but only because of their persistent *will* and *choice* of vanity”—sin.—(d) To say that they are groaning and travelling in pain waiting for the adoption and redemption promised to God’s people, would be an infinite falsehood, for nothing could be farther from the truth of the case.

3. No other significance remains to put upon these words—“creature,” “creation”—except *this material world*, animate or inanimate, or both. The objection to including the animate creation, the non-rational animals of our globe, is that we have no evidence of their immortality; and the presumption seems to be against the supposition. That they should sympathize with the thralldom brought upon all nature by reason of the sin of the race is no more difficult than to conceive of such sympathy in the inanimate creation. I judge that it is a matter of no particular moment whether we include the non-rational animals or exclude them. The inanimate creation is unquestionably in the apostle’s thought.

Speculations upon the possible future of this material globe may be wisely postponed till we know something more than is yet revealed.

24. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25. But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

Paul would not say that hope is a Saviour in the same sense as Christ is; but only that hope is called into exercise by the discipline of earth ripening us for final salvation. The objects of our christian hope are yet unseen. If they were fully seen, hope in the sense of faith in things not

seen, would be uncalled for. The reader will notice that “hope” is used here nearly in the sense of faith. It is faith combined with earnest expectation. This waiting [“with patience”] is the same word and the same thing as in v. 23—“*waiting for the adoption.*”

26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*

This “likewise” compares the help given us by the Spirit to the inspirations of hope brought to view in the two previous verses; or possibly it may look further back in the chapter to other agencies of the Spirit.—“Helpeth our infirmities”—certainly in the sense of helping us *under our infirmities*; giving us fresh strength because we are weak and to enable us to bear burdens too great for our unaided strength.—Especially he helps us in prayer; first, to apprehend more truly what we need under present exigencies; and next, to pour forth our longing desires with groanings which no words can utter. This twofold help is clearly indicated here. “What to pray for as we ought”—means what our present circumstances call for and what therefore we have present occasion to ask. It is a precious truth that in our ignorance on this point, the Spirit of all light comes to our relief with suggestions wiser and better adapted to our case than our unaided wisdom could reach.

Next, this interceding for us is best explained, not as an intercession before God—this agency being elsewhere ascribed to our great Mediator and High Priest—the Son of God; but as an inspiration which acts upon our sensibilities and calls forth intense longings of desire. That is to say, the sphere of his action is not before the throne of God, but within the human soul. Our conscious experience testifies that this is done by heightening immensely our sense of the preciousness of the blessings we need, and also by fresh and clear views of God’s waiting readiness to “give us exceedingly above all we can ask or think.”

God who searches all hearts knows the mind—*i. e.* the

prayerful, longing state of mind—produced in us by the Spirit, because his spiritual impulses in our souls (his intercessions for and in the saints) are always in harmony with God's thought [“according to God.”] The Father will always comprehend perfectly the prayer which his own Spirit begets and inspires, for it never can be any thing else or other than in and with his will.

The great truth imbedded in these verses takes us into the deep experiences of true prayer. The divine Spirit helps all really praying souls, both in the line of knowing what to ask, and of asking for larger blessings, with intenser longings and with more assured faith.—With the Spirit of God so freely and so abundantly promised—energizing our souls unto and in our prayer; suggesting what we shall ask for; inspiring desires unutterable and faith unfaltering;—what may not prayer accomplish!

Moreover, let it be noted that though Paul very often speaks of the Holy Spirit's dwelling within the souls of God's people as in a temple, yet he has nowhere else explained so fully what his special agencies are, particularly in the matter of prayer and of direct communion with God. This passage therefore has preëminent value and should have a large place in our conceptions of the positive agencies of the Spirit in Christian experience and toward the Christian life.

28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.

30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

“Working together” in the sense of coöperating, combining their influences and agencies to this result.—“We know,” suggests that this is a matter of universal Christian experience and consciousness.—Remarkably this co-working for good gathers strength from both the preceding and the following context; from the preceding, for with such privileges of prevailing prayer in the Holy Ghost,

how can anything that bears upon us in the line of either God's providence or his grace, fail to work for our good?—From the following context also; for those whom God has called according to his purpose, he has surely committed himself to carry through triumphantly to the glorious consummation of their purity and bliss in heaven.—Foreknowing, foreordering, calling, justifying, glorifying,—succeed each other in their natural order with no derangement, no break, no failure in the ultimate result. What God thus sets his heart upon accomplishing will never fail! This is a sufficient reason why all things must combine their agencies unto the good of all who love God, being his called ones—called with most distinct purpose to bring forth their final glorification.

Noticeably, the people upon whom all things shall combine for their good are described here, not primarily as “the called ones,” but by a descriptive trait of much safer application—*viz.* “them that love God.”—Who his “called ones” are, God himself would know perfectly; but men might mistake if that were the only criterion. But loving God falls within the pale of personal experience. “Them that love God” have the witness of it deep in their own heart—certainly so if this love has become a positive element in their character, and if it moves them perpetually to “*do his commandments.*” “He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me.”

“Predestinated”—*to what?*—Not, to be borne from earth to heaven, primarily, merely, or chiefly—as some seem to suppose;—but *to be transformed morally into the image of Christ, the Son;* to be saved from sin and made like Christ in spirit and life—a fact that should never be overlooked. Hence the proof of one’s own personal election must always lie in this conformity of heart and life to the image of Christ, and will be in measure *as this conformity; no more, no less.*

It is worthy of notice that when Paul had occasion to say that Jesus would have many brethren like himself, even a multitude of redeemed souls, morally washed from their pollutions and wrought into his own pure moral image, he should say it in this particular way:—That he might be the first-born among many brethren;”—which puts Christ wholly in the foreground; makes emphatic the fact of his infinite supremacy; and pertinently throws his people be-

hind him as filling the subordinate place of “brethren” under their Great Chief.

Perhaps a word is due upon the point very distinctly assumed here—*viz.* that foreknowledge comes in the order of nature before “predestination.” The order of the five successive steps—“foreknow ;” “predestine ;” “call ;” “justify ;” “glorify”—is plainly not accidental but of design;—is not a chance arrangement, but a well considered method, following throughout an order of nature. It is therefore legitimate to infer that foreknowledge is here before predestination, because it belongs here in the order of God’s thought and act.—Noticeably Peter has the same doctrine;—“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1: 2).

On this subject I can only take time to suggest briefly the following points :

1. This order of nature in the divine mind *provides a sphere for human freedom*; *i.e.* for the really free agency of beings created to be morally free and therefore legitimately responsible for their free moral activities.

2. This is not equivalent to saying that personal election turns upon God’s foreseeing what free moral agents would do *without and apart from* his own spiritual influence; but,

3. It may supposably open the way for election to turn upon what free moral agents are foreseen to do *under God’s influence*.

4. As to the reprobate, the scriptures are entirely definite and emphatic in the doctrine that reprobation assumes them to have been tried morally with proffered truth, promise, mercy—but to have been found wanting and therefore rejected, disapproved, shut off from salvation; “given over to a reprobate mind because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (Rom. 1: 28).

Of course this reasoning assumes that what occurs here in time interprets to us what was God’s thought and plan in the past eternity, and what was the ultimate ground and reason for it.

31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who *can be* against us?

32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

That God is *for us*, we may surely assume most absolutely. His purpose to call, justify, glorify, assumes and implies this beyond possible question.—Then who can be against us? Who can withstand God and thwart his purpose?

Then follows this remarkable inference:—God did not spare his own Son—the word “*own*” emphatic;—the very Son He so loved:—but delivered him up to torture and death for us all. Now then, how is it possible that he can withhold anything we really need? How can he fail to give us most freely all things else? That *which costs* he has given already. That which costs comparatively nothing remains to be given. Will not the great love which so cheerfully met the cost of agony and shame involved in the gift of his Son avail to the giving of all the lesser—the *not costly* gifts, yet required for our salvation?

33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth.

34. Who is he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who can bring an indictment against God’s elect to work a forfeiture of their title to life eternal? If their own God justifies them, who shall or can condemn?—Paul’s well chosen words here are intensely strong and bring out the personality of God with remarkable force:—God is the justifying One: Who is the condemning One? Jesus Christ is the dying One; or rather the Risen One, who is at God’s right hand and who also makes intercession for us—is committed therefore, to the extent of all his infinite resources to stand for his people before the throne of the Father. What more or better can we desire?

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life,

nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come.

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here “the love of Christ” is not our love to him but his love to and for us. The drift of the context requires this construction, since it treats throughout of the great love of God and of his Son toward his people.

The triumphant, extatic conclusion to which this whole argument has brought the great soul of the apostle, is that nothing can separate us from this great love. Expanding this thought for the greater emphasis and giving his mind scope and range through all the fields of possibility, he makes really two distinct spheres :—the first, of things to be encountered in the present world, within the average life of the Christian men of that age; tribulations, distresses, persecution, famine, peril, sword :—Shall any of these things separate us from Christ’s love ? Nay, verily ; our conflicts with these enemies, our endurance even unto death under these trials and pains will only endear us the more to our Saviour.—Then rising to the higher sphere of supposable possible or actual powers, of hostile bearing toward us, he declares—“ I am persuaded (ye may say—how can he know?) but he would answer I am at least most *fully persuaded* that nothing in heaven above or in hell beneath—no unknown power springing up in the dark unexplored realms of spiritual being—shall ever be able to separate us from the love of God which reveals itself in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Under this full, this rich persuasion, his mind subsides into repose, filled, we may assume, with profoundest adoration and most grateful praise.



CHAPTER IX.

The first five verses of this chapter may best be considered by themselves before we open the broad questions that

bear upon the general scope and purpose of the rest of the chapter. I propose this method, not to ignore the bearing of these five verses upon the general theme of the chapter, but specially because here are two passages, (*viz.* v. 3 and v. 5) which call for somewhat elaborate discussion. This may best be disposed of at the outset.

1. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost;
2. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.
3. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh :

Very noticeable here are the strength and solemnity of this asseveration of his great sorrow over the case of his fellow countrymen. “Truth I speak in Christ ; I do not lie ; my conscience bears concurrent witness with me in the Holy Ghost.”—The words, “in Christ”—some take to be a form of sacred oath, swearing by the name of Christ ; but this view should be peremptorily rejected as being entirely without support in usage, and vicious in principle. In usage, “in Christ” means in my character as a christian —“in Christ” signifying the sphere of my activities as one acting in Christ, living for him and in him. So living, I say this in all truthfulness.—Cases of analogous usage may be seen in Eph. 4: 17—1 Thess. 4: 1 and 2 Cor. 4: 17 and 12: 19.—Appeals to the Supreme Being by using any of his names to confirm the truth of statements cannot be too severely rebuked. Let us not bring in Paul guilty of profane swearing !

The special reasons for this most emphatic affirmation of his veracity, we must notice in the sequel.

I now invite the reader’s particular attention to the first clause of v. 3—“I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren.”

Critics and commentators have been remarkably unanimous in sustaining this construction, yet in my judgment without good reason and against some fundamental laws of just interpretation.

To simplify my presentation of my views, I put the

issue thus ;—We are to choose between (a) the authorized version [the A. V.] ; and (b) That which puts the clause in question *into a parenthesis* thus :—“I have sorrow in my heart (*for* I myself was [once] wishing to be accursed from Christ) for my brethren” *etc.* In this construction his great sorrow is *for* his brethren ; and the intervening words in parenthesis assign a special reason for feeling this keen sorrow, *viz.* because I know but too well how they feel having been in the same state myself.

A few preliminary points should be briefly noted :—

(a). Paul did not divide this letter into chapters, and therefore does not forbid our connecting this thought—“*being anathema from Christ,*” with the being “*separated from Christ*” (as in 8: 35–39).

(b). Paul left no marks of parenthesis anywhere—yet we are often obliged to put them in because his obvious meaning requires it. Indeed he gave no punctuation at all—*e.g.* no period at the close of v. 2.

(c). The textual variations affect only the order of some of the words, and not the sense or construction at all.

(d). The Greek construction of the clause—“*that myself were accursed*”—is that of the accusative before the infinitive—in English thus—*could wish myself to be accursed, etc.* The precise form of this Greek sentence will be a matter of some importance in the sequel, and is therefore stated here.

(e). Next, let it be noted that parenthetic clauses are by no means uncommon in Paul—neither strange to his style or to his habits of thought. No other writer of the Bible has so many as Paul. In his passages of deep emotion, they are very common.—Moreover, be it noted, they are naturally introduced as here by “*for*” (“*gar*”), giving a reason for what he has just said.—A good illustration of this point is Rom. 2: 11–14 where four successive verses begin with “*for*” (*gar*), each assigning its successive reason, and all coming in to fill out a very long parenthesis.

My reasons for rejecting the authorized version and adopting the parenthetic translation will naturally fall into three classes :

I. Grammatical :

II. *Exegetical, i.e.* from history, from the context, from the course of thought and nature of the case *etc.*

III. From the *nature of the sentiment* which the A. V. involves.

I. Grammatical.

1. It is entirely vital to any just interpretation of this passage that it should rest first of all upon what Paul actually said.—Now according to the normal usage of his mood and tense Paul did not say—“I could wish ;” but he said ; I *was* [once] *wishing*. That is, his word is in the imperfect tense of the indicative mood—a tense which is habitually, and with remarkably *fixed* usage employed to express a past act or state, *continued* ;—I *was wishing*—was once in the past, in a state of wishing.—Observe, Paul is quite thoroughly a master of the Greek tongue and is not wont to be reckless of his grammar. The Greek language had two ways of saying “I could wish,” viz. (a) A special form of the verb (called the *Optative* mood); and (b) The use of the particle “*an*” before the indicative to give it the sense of the Optative. Now Paul might have used either of these methods of saying “I could wish ;” but in fact he did not use either of them. Therefore the A. V. puts into his mouth what he did not say and misinterprets what he did say.

To obviate this objection, critics have sought New Testament passages in which the imperfect indicative (which stands here) is used for the optative without “*an*.” Three such are adduced as authorities ; viz.—(a) Acts 25 : 22 which the Auth. version translates ; “I would also hear the man myself ;” but literally—I myself was wishing to hear the man : the words of Agrippa to Festus in regard to hearing Paul.—Now considering the antecedents of this Agrippa, it is reasonably certain that he had heard of Paul and had been quite desirous to hear him speak. The standard usage of his word (imperfect indicative)—I *was wishing to hear him*—corresponds with the reasonable facts of the case and should therefore be taken as his meaning. “I would like to hear him now”—is only an inference. Thus this case is no usage of the imperfect for the optative without “*an*,” and affords no support to the construction given in the Auth. version of our passage.—(b.) In Phil. 13 Paul (as translated in the Auth. version) said of Onesimus—“Whom I would have retained with me.”—but precisely—“Whom I was wishing to retain with myself”—for the good reason that he was very useful to me. This latter is what Paul said and all he said—and this is no op-

tative mood at all. The optative—I would like, or could have wished, to retain him, is only an inference from what he really said.—Thus this case also fails to give authority for the optative sense of our imperfect indicative without “an.”

(c.) Gal. 4 : 20. is the third passage, adduced as authority.—This reads I *have been wishing* (*i. e.* while writing this entire epistle) that I were present with you, instead of saying these sharp things by letter ; for then, less severe words coupled with mild tones and possibly tears, would have availed.

Thus these cases cited to justify translating Paul’s word here—“I could wish,” seem all to come under the normal usage of the imperfect indicative, and therefore give no support to the translation of the Auth. version.—Let it be noted moreover, that if these cases were clearly optatives they are few in number and their weight should be measured on the scale against the normal and at least *almost* universal usage of this form to denote past continuous action ; I *was wishing*.*

* The most important cases of usage will be—first—of the same verb which we have here [Eukomai, pray], and next of the very analogous verb (boulomai, wish). It cannot be amiss therefore to examine all the N. T. cases in which either of these verbs is found in either the imperfect indicative or the optative form. These are the best possible authority for the *usage* of these words.

1. Eukomai appears in the same imperfect indicative [as in Rom. 9 : 3]—in Acts 27 : 29. “The sailors, fearing they should fall into the narrows, having cast from the stern four anchors, *were praying for day to come*”—not *would pray* or *could pray*, but *were praying*.—This is precisely what the imperfect indicative ought, by the laws of the Greek Grammar, to mean. Again, in Acts 26 : 29, Paul uses the same verb to express impassioned prayer—the real optative—the same sentiment which our Auth. version puts into this word in Rom. 9 : 3 : Does Paul use the imperfect indicative form for it ? Not at all—but he uses the real optative form and makes it yet stronger by appending “an.” “I *would* to God—(*i. e.* I would pray to God) “that not only thou but all who hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

These two are the only cases of usage for this verb that are germain to our enquiry—one, imperfect indicative ; the other optative ; both bearing with their full strength *against* the auth. version and *in favor* of the construction—I *was wishing*.

2. Boulomai. Two cases of usage for this verb have been considered above ; viz., Acts 25 : 22 and Phil. 13.

Besides these are the following. Acts 28 : 18, “Who having examined me, *were willing* [or wishing] to release me [in the A. V.

Some critics claim a very special sense for this form of the verb in all the four passages (including the one in hand as the fourth)—viz. I could wish, *under some not defined circumstances*, but do not wish it in view of *all* the circumstances of the case. But I see no reason for giving this special sense to the words of Agrippa (Acts 25 : 22) nor to Paul (Gal. 4 : 20); and this modification in our passage—“I could” (under some supposable circumstances but *not under all* the circumstances) “wish myself a curse”—leaves them without much definite significance of any sort.

2. The words “I myself” [Gr. “ego autos”] in this clause constitute a very valuable criterion of the precise meaning. For in the Greek tongue “ego” is never written out except for the purpose of emphasis—a certain degree more or less of emphasis, calling attention to the personality and placing it naturally in contrast or antithesis with something else. “Autos” with it heightens this emphasis, *I myself* being stronger than “I” alone. [There can be no question that “autos” qualifies “ego,” (I).] Now let it be carefully observed that this *I myself* must either come before the verb (A. V. “could” wish), or before the infinitive *to be*, i. e. a curse. In the former supposition, it gives this emphasis;—For *I myself* was [once] wishing to be separated from Christ. In the latter—For I could wish that *I myself* were separated from Christ: i. e. in behalf of my brethren. In the former alternative the emphasis lies in comparing his own former experience with theirs; in the latter, it lays stress on what he himself would gladly suffer for the sake of saving his brethren.—I

“would have let me go”]—but really, the sense is not optative or subjunctive, but imperfect indicative—*were wishing* to let me go.

(b.) Another decisive case is 2 Cor. 1 : 15. “In this confidence, I was wishing before to come to you”:—imperfect indicative, and with the sense—not I could wish, but certainly, I *was wishing*.

(c.) Finally we have for this verb one case of the real optative form—viz. in Acts 25 : 20. “I asked him whether he *would go* to Jerusalem”—i. e. if he would be willing to go—a legitimate use of the optative—such as our auth. ver. puts upon our contested passage—I could wish. But Festus used—not the imperfect indicative, but the genuine optative mood.

These cases exhaust the New Testament list of authorities for the usage of these two verbs. I submit that usage is solid *against* the construction of the auth. version, and *in favor of* the parenthetical—I was wishing.

trust the reader will see how much turns upon locating these two emphatic words. There is a wide difference between the first—"For *I myself* was wishing (once as they do now); and the second :—For I could wish to be *my very self* a curse from Christ for my brethren—making myself a sacrifice for their salvation. Every reader will see that the former location of these emphatic words falls in fully with the parenthetic construction; while the latter equally falls in with and sustains the authorized version.

It is now in place to apply the principles of Greek grammar to the location of these emphatic words :—and say (1) That not the least objection can lie against placing them before the verb *wish*; But (2) That the principles of Greek grammar forbid placing them before the infinitive, *to be*, "Autos" alone (though it be a nominative) might stand before this infinitive (*to be*), but "ego" cannot stand there. Ego can never stand as the subject before the infinitive. This, I take to be an invariable law of the Greek tongue. If so, then our words,—"*I myself*"—must belong to the verb "*wish*" as its subject and consequently, throw the full weight of their emphasis in favor of the parenthetic construction and against that of the Auth. version.

Therefore on these strong grammatical grounds we must translate—not "*I could wish myself to be accursed*"; but "*I myself was [once] wishing to be accursed from Christ*." The former, violating the fixed usages of Greek grammar should be rejected; the latter, following closely those laws should be accepted.

II. *Exegetical Argument.*

1. First and foremost is the influence of the immediately preceding context. This whole line of thought (v.1-3.) was suggested by those sublime sentiments (8:35, 38 and 39);—"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—"I am persuaded that neither death nor life. . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus!"—"But alas, as I think of my unbelieving brethren, how am I agonized! They are utter strangers to this blessedness of being forever united with Christ. I know but too well how they feel; I have felt it all myself! Their present feeling is precisely my past feeling over again!"—Now I see no reason to doubt that the thought in the open-

ing of chap. 9 links itself in this way to the closing thought of chap. 8.—this latter suggesting the very opposite state of feeling then reigning and raging in the hearts of unbelieving Jews.

2. Next let it be carefully noted that as the preceding context (8: 35–39.) leads the thought of our passage, so does it also in great part shape the expression. Especially it brings forward the idea of *separation from Christ*. As that was the central thought in the preceding context, so is it the leading thought here. Paul thinks first of the unbelieving Jews as having not the least sympathy with his joy in being never separated from Christ; and next (a suggested thought) as cursing the name of the Christ whom Christians adored. The combined influence of these thoughts seems to have shaped his phrase—“*Anathema from the Christ*.”

It is one of the fixed and potent laws of language that the context which leads the thought should also give shape to the expression. And if we couple with this influence, that of the historic fact respecting the unbelieving Jews—that they used this word “anathema” over the name of the Christian’s “Christ,” we seem to have accounted adequately for these words of Paul, “Anathema from the Christ.”

It is a fact of history that unbelieving Jews cursed both Christians and Christ. In Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, he said—“Ye curse Him and them that believe on Him.” Trypho confessed to Justin that the Jewish Doctors forbade their pupils to dispute with Christians because they blasphemed in comparing Jesus Christ with Moses; and on the other hand, christians would hold no argument with Jews because they cursed Christ.” (Jahn’s Heb. Commonwealth, p. 550).—The New Testament has various traces of this appalling Jewish usage of the word “anathema” over the name of Christ;—e. g. what Paul says (Acts 26: 11.) of his mad persecution, of the Christian sect—“Compelled them to blaspheme” i.e. “to curse the name of Christ” (Alex.). “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema” (not “anathema,” for honoring that name as the Jews were imprecating their anathemas,) but for *not* loving it. (1. Cor. 16: 22).—“No man, speaking by the Spirit, calleth Jesus anathema” (1. Cor. 12: 3).

The objection that “anathema from Christ” cannot

fittly be said of one who had not been personally *in Christ*, (so that Paul could not say it of himself before his conversion), finds its answer in the controlling influence of the preceding context—“separated from Christ”—which Paul first thinks of as to himself gloriously *impossible*; next as being what the unbelieving Jews virtually imprecated with anathemas,—which madness of guilty unbelief Paul remembers to have once felt himself as they did then. Therefore he knows but too well their guilt and their doom. The most appalling consequence of that rabid unbelief was that its anathema over the name of Christ involved separation from Christ forever.

3. In the punctuation of the authorized version with period at the end of v. 2, the sentiment of vs. 1, 2 is left incomplete, unfinished. We ask, “great sorrow”—over what? and get no answer. The sentence needs something to lean upon—but finds nothing. We have it supplied precisely and most satisfactorily when we connect v. 2. with what comes after the proposed parenthesis—thus: “I have continued sorrow in my heart” (. . .) “for my brethren.” The parenthesis gives a valid reason for his great sorrow, and yet without preventing him from saying what his great sorrow is for. Here, the parenthesis finds its natural place and fills it. This is the sort of reasoning that justifies the introduction of the parenthesis.

4. The first word of this V. 3. “for”—representing the Greek “gar”—indicates a logical connection. By well established usage, what follows gar (“for”) gives a reason for what precedes—in this case a reason for his great sorrow. But if we accept the authorized version, this reason has not the least pertinence. To say—I have great sorrow because I could wish myself accursed from Christ—is to talk nonsense. It not merely assigns no worthy reason; it assigns no reason at all.—On the other construction, putting this clause in a parenthesis, this word [gar] is forcibly pertinent. I have this great sorrow over my brethren because I know their heart; I have had all those feelings myself! I know their delusion—their infatuation—and their doom!

5. If the sentiment of the auth. version is right, Paul should have approached and introduced it thus:—I am so agonized for my unbelieving brethren that I could even wish to be separated from Christ for their sake.—This

would be more natural and sensible than to say—I am in great agony *because* I could wish to be separated from Christ!

6. Yet further; If the general sentiment of the Auth. version is right, Paul should have chosen a verb with the sense of *endure* rather than *desire*:—I could even *endure* to be separated from Christ—not, I could desire, pray for—such separation. The difference is great—too great for such a man as Paul to overlook and ignore.

7. The translation of the Auth. version is indefensible because it is compelled to add to the inspired word a vital clause which Paul left out—*viz.* this—if it would do any good; if my becoming anathema from Christ would save them.—But here it is pertinent to recall the fact that Paul has shown himself very jealous of other gospels—other names by which to be saved except the one glorious name of Jesus. If even an angel from heaven were to bring forward any other name, Paul says, “Let him be accursed” (Gal. 1: 8). Is Paul then the man to put himself forward as the atoning sacrifice for his unbelieving brethren, to be himself a curse from Christ, for the sake of their salvation? —And this, moreover, with no reference to the implied condition—*If* it could be of any avail!

The scheme of interpretation which is obliged to introduce implied conditions so important as this, yet not expressed, must labor heavily. The dilemma is stern either way—to put in the condition or to leave it out; either would seem to be fatal to this construction.

To evade this dilemma by virtually saying that Paul wrote this impulsively, and did not really mean any such thing, only escapes one difficulty by plunging into another. Did Paul use words without any real meaning?

III. It remains to speak of the nature of the sentiment which the auth. version involves.

1. It seems not only incongruous but revolting; to bring Paul down from that sublime height of assurance that nothing should ever separate him from Christ, and make him say—I could wish to be separated from Christ, even as a curse!

2. As said above, it is revolting to interpret his words, to suggest the possibility of saving his brethren by such self-immolation. Was Paul the man to do this?

3. Bearing in mind that the context requires that

“anathema from Christ,” should be essentially *separation* from Christ ; and also that the case of the unbelieving Jews must interpret and determine Paul’s meaning in these words, we are compelled to say that this wish and prayer are a *great sin*. It certainly was sin as it lay in the hearts of the unbelieving Jews, cursing the name of Christ. It was a sin of the same sort as it lay in Paul’s ungodly life, when he was “compelling Christians to blaspheme;” and this, it would seem, must be the sense of his words here. Still more revolting and insupposable will this appear, if we consider that it is this very sin of his brethren which agonizes his heart at this moment so terribly ! Is it possible, now, that in the same breath he can say—“I could wish for myself the same sin and the same doom, in behalf of my brethren !”

4. The common attempt to justify the auth. version by appeal to Moses (Ex. 32: 32), is a failure. Moses says only this :—Lord, thou art threatening to blot this nation from thy book of the living (earthly life) ; I pray thee forgive ; or if not, blot out my name also !—So far as appears, this looks to the death of the body only ; and means only the sacrifice of his personal life for the nation’s life—to which there is not the least moral objection. This is Christian heroism. Many a man has been ready to give up his earthly life for the life of a nation. It is a totally different thing from wishing to be anathema from Christ—separated, like the unbelieving Jews, from his Saviour Jesus Christ, forever.

My final remark is, that if in some minds the auth. version has found favor, because it is thought to make Paul a moral hero, and his sacrifice of himself a second Calvary, this consideration should never be allowed to override the just laws of interpretation.

4. Who are Israelites ; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of *God*, and the promises :

5. Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

“Who indeed are Israelites ;” or inasmuch as they are.

—“To whom belongs the adoption,” for of them God said through Moses ;—“Israel is my son, even my first-born.” (Ex. 4: 22, and 19: 5, 6, and Deut. 14: 1, 2).—Also “the glory ;”—which in the Old Testament sense, was the visible, manifested effulgence or glory of the divine Presence, reposing upon the mercy-seat, in the inner sanctuary.—“And the covenants”—*i. e.* those made first with Abraham ; repeated and reaffirmed to Isaac and to Jacob :—“The giving of the law” on Sinai—an event of supreme national importance.—“The service of God”—this term “service” denoting the religious rites of national worship to be observed at the tabernacle and temple.—Last, not least—“the promises,” culminating in their Messiah, yet including also the grand events of his reign over his gospel kingdom, unto the filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and evangelizing the nations. Thus far Paul catalogues the blessings, largely of external sort and relations, with which God had distinguished ancient Israel.

Besides those, they also inherited the fathers—the legacy of their names, their faith, their heroic virtues ; but highest and best of all, is this—that in their line came Christ, the long promised Messiah *i. e.*, as to his human nature—“of the flesh.”

On the last clause of v. 5, critical opinions divide broadly into two classes, indicated primarily by the punctuation, but fundamentally by the resulting sense, on the point whether the last clause shall refer to Christ, or to God only and *not* to Christ.

(a.) One class of critics sustain the A. V., placing only a comma after “flesh,” [in the Greek—of whom is Christ as to the “flesh”?]—thus making the article and participle [$\delta\omegaν$] refer to Christ, and the last clause affirm that he is “God over all, to be blessed forever.”

(b.) The other class place a full period after “flesh,” and then read the last clause as a special doxology to God : “Let the one who is over all be blessed forever !”

The reader will bear in mind that punctuation does not come down from the inspired writers, nor is it indicated in the oldest manuscripts. In fact it is a matter of interpretation, depending on exegesis and not by any means leading and controlling it. Consequently it has come to pass, that doctrinal opinions have for the most part decided the judgment of the critics. Those who assume that Paul

ought not to call Jesus “Theos” [God] and cannot be supposed to have done so, will punctuate and interpret in the second above named method; while those who raise no objection to Paul’s applying the name Theos to Christ, have sustained the Authorized Version.

It is due to the former class to say that they find Theos *usually* applied to the Father, and in their opinion, never elsewhere applied to Christ. Of this they make large account.—[The full examination of this point would scarcely come within my plan in these Notes].

There are, however, some considerations other than doctrinal which are worthy of regard.

(a.) To arrest what Paul is saying of Christ at the word “flesh” and then introduce matter respecting God which does not refer at all to Christ, is abrupt, harsh, unnatural. The article [*ὁ* before the participle *ων*], equivalent to a relative pronoun, calls for an antecedent; but on construction second, calls in vain. To begin a new sentence in this way is an anomaly, and should have strong grounds of support, or be rejected.

(b.) Having spoken of Christ, the nation’s Messiah, as to his human nature, it is specially appropriate to speak in this immediate connection of his divine nature. Moreover, this is not only appropriate in itself, but is in accordance with Paul’s usage, as may be seen in this epistle (1 : 3, 4).

To obviate objections to this authorized version and to its construction will conduce to its support. Hence,—(1) The objection to applying the name “Theos” to the Messiah is abated by the circumstance that it stands without the article. Paul does not say “*the* God,” but only “God”—as John says (John 1 : 1) “the word was God,” but does not say—was *the* God. The latter, if said, might be understood to mean—Comprises in himself all there is in God—is the one supreme God.—(2.) If it be said that Paul nowhere applies the name Theos to Christ, it may be replied that the fair and all but necessary construction of Tit. 2 : 13 gives to Christ this name: “Looking for the glorious appearing of the Great God, even of our Saviour Jesus Christ. (See my Notes on this passage).—(3.) If it be said that the words—“over all”—are inapplicable to Christ, inasmuch as they would exalt him above even the Father and make him the Supreme God; I reply—There is no occasion to strain these words to that extent. Why

need they mean more than the words “Lord of all”—twice applied to Christ (Acts 10 : 36, and Rom. 10 : 12), or more than Paul has very explicitly affirmed even with remarkable detail (in Eph. 1 : 20–22), “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet:” or (in Phil. 2 : 9–11)—“God hath highly exalted him and gave him a name which is above every name. . . . that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

It must be admitted that the cases in which the name “Theos” is applied to Christ are very rare—are the exceptions, not the rule. Ordinarily the remark of Meyer is true; “There runs through the whole New Testament a delicate line of separation between the Father and the Son; so that, although the divine essence and glory of the latter are glorified with the loftiest predicates in manifold ways, nevertheless it is [with rare exceptions] only the Father to whom the Son is throughout subordinated, and never Christ who is actually called God by the Apostles.”

4. It is said that this word “blessed” [*eulogetos*] is used elsewhere of the Father only. With the exception of our passage here, I think this is the case. The instances are Mark 16 : 61—Luke 1 : 68—Rom. 1 : 25—2 Cor. 1 : 3 and 11 : 31, and Eph. 1 : 3, and 1 Pet. 1 : 3. But nothing imperatively forbids that this word should be used of Christ as Lord of all. Certainly He too is worthy to be blessed forever.

Finally, the considerations in support of the authorized version are in my judgment strong, yet not such as amount to philological or exegetical demonstration.

Some general remarks on the scope of the chapter (especially v. 6–33), will be in place here.

It requires only a superficial reading of this chapter to see that, having spoken of his great sorrow over his unbelieving Jewish countrymen, he proceeds for some reason to speak in very strong terms of the *divine sovereignty* as manifested towards Israel, and for his authority appeals to the writings of Moses, Hosea and Isaiah.

But it requires more than a merely surface reading of

the chapter to comprehend what were the underlying reasons for this strong presentation of divine sovereignty. To understand these we shall need to ascertain what people Paul is writing for and holding in his thought throughout this chapter and the two next following. Who is the ideal objector who is supposed to claim that if what Paul assumes be true, then “the word of God has taken none effect” (v. 6);—who meets him with the objection: “Then there must be unrighteousness with God” (v. 14); and who “replies against God” (as indicated in v. 20).—We shall feel the more sure that we have the right clew to the whole argument of Paul if we find some satisfactory reasons for his intensely strong affirmation of his great sorrow over the case of his lineal brethren; for these affirmations quite obviously assume that Paul scarcely hopes to be believed—at least is conscious of speaking against a very stubborn skepticism.—Light on these points may help us understand how this doctrine of divine sovereignty lay in Paul’s mind and what bearing it had in his thought upon the related doctrine of human agency.

Here I must recall the remark made in my General Introduction and often in the Notes—that the key to its just interpretation lies in the *Pharisee*. The *Pharisaic Jew* is the man with whom Paul is debating; the man for whom he is writing.

His distinctive character, his moral and theological attitude, are ever before Paul’s mind. The objections which Paul anticipates and promptly meets are sprung upon him by the Pharisee. The Pharisee is the debater with whom Paul holds the argument. We may remember that as he appears throughout the gospel history, the Pharisee is a chronic debater, we might say, a born disputant, a wrangler. Did he not try “to entangle Jesus in his talk?”—Thus we have seen throughout chap. 6 and 7, that the Pharisaic doctrine of being “under law” as a power both to sanctify and to justify, has led the thought and argument of Paul. Here in chap. 9, the same Pharisee is before Paul’s mind. He thinks of the Pharisees as persistently rejecting Christ in unbelief, and as leading the masses of the Jewish nation—his own countrymen and theirs—into this appalling moral ruin. His heart is burdened with grief; for he looks upon the great body of the nation as lost—lost despite of all their grand national privileges, prerogatives and possibili-

ties ; despite of their being Israelites, inheriting “the adoption ;” “the glory,” “the covenants,” the giving of the law and the promises ;” and more than all, the honor of having the Messiah born in their line as to his human flesh.

But mark ;—this Pharisee does not thank Paul for such sympathy over himself and his countrymen as *lost men*, and lost moreover, because of their Pharisaism. He resents the imputation as an insult. We all lost ! We who are the chief elect of God ! We who “have Abraham to our father,” and are heirs with him of all the promises !—Would you assume that those glorious promises to Abraham have utterly failed and come to nought ?

Paul hears what they are saying in their heart, and therefore, (beginning with v. 6) he replies :

6. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel :

7. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children : but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God : but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9. For this *is* the word of promise ; At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

Ye quite misapprehend this matter of God’s promises. There is no such thing as that God’s word of promise should fail of being accomplished ! For be it noticed, it is one thing to be “of Israel” by blood, and quite another to be the true Israel in heart. Not all of the former class come into the latter. Ye may be of Israel by descent, and yet not the real Israel in character.—So also the promise to Abraham does not run to all his lineal posterity ; for Ishmael is entirely left out, and only “in Isaac” is the promised seed found. The significance of this is that the children of the promise and not the children of the flesh are counted as the true seed of Abraham.

10. And not only *this* ; but when Rebbecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac,

11. (For the *children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God

according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth :)

12. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Here is a second limitation ; for of the twin sons of Rebecca and Isaac, one only had the birthright and the promises. Before their birth, God had said to the mother ; “The elder shall serve the younger” (See Gen. 25: 23). The Prophet Malachi (1: 2, 3) is also quoted to the like result ;—“I loved Jacob and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains waste in desolation.” Paul makes a special point of the circumstance that God made known this choice of Jacob rather than Esau *before* their birth, and therefore before they had done either moral good or evil. From this fact he infers that this choice did not turn upon their personal doings or character, but upon God’s purpose—the grounds of which are not revealed. Paul does not either say or imply that God *had no reasons*. He only denies that those reasons lay in the moral good or evil of the two sons between whom God’s choice was made.—It should also be specially noted that in this case the electing purpose of God had reference to these sons *as being or not being the heirs of God’s great promises to Abraham and to his seed*. *In which* of the two should these lineal blessings descend ? This question was not that of their individual salvation or damnation, and therefore Paul does not say or even imply that the personal salvation of these twin brothers was determined in God’s counsels irrespective of their moral action and character. The special point of the discussion here is the line of descent in which the blessings promised to Abraham and to his seed should flow, and the limitations and choices made in his lineal posterity.—These points were pertinent to the grand issue between Paul and the Pharisee—this Pharisee insisting that all men, having Abraham’s blood in their veins, especially if they glorified the law of Moses, were favorites of God and sure of Abraham’s paradise. Paul would have them understand that this sort of title to God’s favor is simply worthless—of no account whatever. They had reasoned from utterly false premises. Paul meant to put it sharply before their mind

that their doctrine must have brought both Ishmael and Esau within the pale of the covenant ; but as it certainly did not, it might also leave out the unbelieving Pharisee.

14. What shall we say then ? *Is there* unrighteousness with God ? God forbid.

15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16. So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

17. For the Scriptures saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Let it be borne carefully in mind that the points at issue between Paul and the Pharisee are—(1) Whether God does in fact discriminate among the lineal seed of Abraham, saving some, and not saving others—Paul affirming ; the Pharisee denying :—and (2) Whether God can do this righteously ;—here also Paul affirming, and the Pharisee denying.—The Pharisee believes and stoutly maintains that Abraham was a Prince among God's elect and that all his children—the Pharisees especially—held under him by the highest and best title ; and furthermore he seems to have assumed that God had so bound himself by his promises to Abraham and to his seed that it would be most unrighteous for him to disown any of them ! A certain arrogance of presumption and a vaunting of their own righteousness even before the face of God stand out prominently in their spirit and bearing.

Against this Paul argues, bringing scripture to show that God *does* discriminate in the exercise of mercy, manifesting it to whom he will and *as* he will ;—*i. e.* on principles which approve themselves to his own infinite reason.—This last named point must be made quite emphatic in order to develop Paul's logic. Observe he affirms that there can never be unrighteousness with God, and assumes as the ground of this affirmation—“*for*” (gar) he declared

to Moses—"I will have mercy on whom I will." Plainly, therefore, Paul assumes that the will of God is *not* caprice but *is* infinite reason—always wise, always righteous.—He quotes first from Moses (Ex. 33: 19)—a passage which as more fully expanded in Ex. 34: 6, 7 makes the divine mercy exceedingly emphatic, yet does certainly dispense it under limitations prescribed by infinite wisdom—*i. e.* in accordance with principles and laws which have their seat and home in the blended wisdom and love of God.—The *name* of God then and there proclaimed, was—"The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth ; but who will by no means clear the guilty."

The second passage from Moses (referred to, v. 17. as what "the scripture said to Pharaoh") is from Ex. 9: 16 which the Auth. version translates substantially as here—"raised thee up"—apparently in the sense of making him a prominent king before the nations, that in him God's power over proud, self-willed kings might be made known and his righteous justice be displayed throughout the earth. The original Hebrew, being literally—"I have made thee to stand," favors the sense, *preserving alive*, when his outrageous wickedness seemed to demand that he should be cut down and not suffered to live. Either way, the case was pertinent to Paul' purpose, *viz.* to show that God discriminated according to his own wisdom, showing mercy to whom he would, and leaving whom he would to self-hardening and to the consequent righteous destruction.—The case of Pharaoh is eminently instructive to the point that God never hardens *by direct agency*, making the hardening his specific and only purpose, as really so as on the other hand he melts, softens, blesses, saves. Whoever would see this shown to the life has only to study the scripture record of the process in which Pharaoh's heart was in fact hardened.—The Lord had a point to carry—the deliverance of his people from bondage. Pharaoh fought him on this point long and stubbornly, yielding a very little when he could do no otherwise, but on the whole carried through the conflict—as proud, self-hardening sinners are wont to do—to the natural result of his own destruction. Noticeably the most hardening act of God—that which seems to have had the most direct and immediately hardening effect—was his lifting off the rod and

showing Pharaoh some mercy. “When Pharaoh saw that there was respite,” his heart stiffened up again in rebellion. “Because vengeance against an evil work is not executed speedily, the heart of the sons of men becomes more fully and firmly set in them to do evil.”—All which shows that God’s agency to harden is that of leaving sinner’s to self-hardening—to let the sinner’s personal free agency run its own way in the highest unrestrained freedom possible.*

At this point it cannot be amiss to call the reader’s special attention to the remarkable fact that when Paul’s heart is painfully saddened by the hard unbelief of sinners (*e. g.* unbelieving Jews), he falls back for his comfort upon the sovereign and righteous ways of God in his moral administration ;—*e. g.* at Antioch in Pisidia, (Acts 13 : 44-48);—“Seeing ye put the word of God from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles;”—And again, at this very Rome (subsequently) after “expounding and testifying the kingdom of God from morning to evening, and some believed the things spoken and some believed not,” Paul left them with that one pungent word from Isa. 6 ; “Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand ; for the heart of this people is waxed gross ; their eyes they have closed, lest they should see, . . . and should be converted, and I should heal them.”—Noticeably the same painful facts drew from the Lord himself, those similar and memorable words (Matt. 11 ; 25, 26) ; “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

The spirit of this seems to be—if some men are too proud and too wise in their own esteem to be converted, God will yet save the humble of heart ; if they are too madly bent on sin to turn, God knows how to make their wrath work out his own praise ; and he *will* !

19. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest

* For a full analysis of the history of Pharaoh’s self-hardening of his own heart, the reader may be referred to my Pentateuch, pages 193-205.

against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22. *What if* God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

It will conduce to a better apprehension of these verses, and indeed of the main drift of this chapter to ask—

What are the definite points as to which Paul assumes that God has a *will* of his own—has a right to have one—and both does and ought to maintain it?

We may name these three :

1. The will to shape the external conditions of every human life as he pleases ; to raise up a Pharaoh to his lofty throne ; to make one vessel for a more honorable use, and another for one less honorable ; to give Ishmael and Esau their personal probation under one set of surroundings ; Isaac and Jacob theirs in another set. No injustice is done to any of these classes by allotting to them diverse external conditions ; for the moral trial turns wholly and only upon their improving the talents God has given them whether one or ten. God never demands of them the use of anything more or other than what he gives them. Herein lies his justicee. This, it seems, is the point put in vs. 20, 21.

2. The will to conduct his moral administration over men on wise and righteous principles, including among these the leaving of proud, self-hardening sinners to their own chosen infatuation when He sees that in justice he can and in wisdom he must. This, we shall see, is the point put so emphatically in v. 22.

3. The will to overrule for his own greater glory all the sin that men madly persist in committing. This “will,” the Lord carried into effect in the case of Pharaoh. This is one manifestation of the will of God which sinners will labor forever in vain to frustrate. In all such attempts they only subserve God’s purposes the more:

In v. 20, Paul seems to have in mind Isa. 45 ; 9 ; in v. 21, Isa. 29 ; 16. Alike these passages rebuke the bold, impious irreverence of wicked men in calling their Maker to account for his righteous and perfect doings. With profoundest wisdom and good sense these passages assume that the creatures of God are bound to treat their Infinite Maker with respect and even reverence.—“Woe to him that striveth with his Maker,” him who is but a potsherd, wrangling with his Infinite Maker as he would with any potsherd of the earth ! As if a man should abuse God for casting his lot in poverty and not in wealth ; for giving him one talent and not ten ! By what right do mortals fly in the face of God with their insults and their complaints against such ways of his providence ?

In v. 22, Paul’s word for “willing”—“willing to show his wrath,” means not consenting but wishing, desiring ; [thelo]. The case comes under the third head as above classified, of points in which God has a *will*—and a *right* to have it—to turn to moral account the persistent sin of wicked men so as to bring out good from their wickedness.

Let it be said here very distinctly and even emphatically that it becomes us to notice what that thing is which Paul here represents God as doing.—Perhaps the reader has been assuming that this replying against God and saying to his Maker—“Why hast thou made me thus ?” really means, and was intended to imply—*Why hast Thou made me a sinner ? Why hast Thou created me a sinful being, with sin in my very constitution ?*

If so, there should be in v. 22 a still more particular development of the same thing ;—What if God, wishing to show his righteous displeasure against sin and his power to punish it, should put forth the same sort of absolute, resistless power which the potter does upon his lump of clay and actually *create sin* ;—*i. e.* create a being with sin in him by virtue of his created nature ?

But before he shall put this construction upon Paul, let him pause and look carefully into the words which Paul does in fact use and the things he does say.

What is *that thing* which God is said to do with a desire to show his righteous displeasure against sin and his power to control and punish it ? Is it this—*create sin* ; *compel* men to sin ?—No indeed ; but this ;—“endured

with much long-suffering ;” bore with their horrible impiety ; their insulting abuse ; their never-ending ingratitude ;—bore all this with marvellous long-suffering, while these vessels of wrath were fitting themselves for destruction !—*Fitting themselves* is beyond question the sense of Paul’s words, for the verb may, in form, be of the middle voice, and the facts of the case demand this construction.

The wicked man is here called a “ vessel of wrath,” from the use of this word “ vessel ” in v. 21. He is a vessel of wrath, by reason of his own free voluntary sin. He has abused God’s patience ; tasked his endurance ; availed himself of God’s long-suffering to sin on worse and worse, as if he thought God was prolonging his life for the very purpose of giving him all the scope for sinning that his wicked heart can desire ! He thus makes himself an object of God’s real wrath.

But what has the Lord done to bring this about ? Specially let the question here be :—What does *Paul say* that God has done to make this sinner what he is ?—Mark the answer:—“ He has *endured* ” his sinning and his mad rebellion “ *with much long-suffering !* ” He has suffered him to live on in sin ! He has waited—Oh, how long and how patiently—and sought to draw him by kindness and to constrain him by manifested goodness, toward and unto repentance. This is the worst thing God has done toward making him a great and incorrigible sinner !—God might have done otherwise, aye, *might* have smitten that sinner dead upon his first sin. Then that sinner would not have had time to fit himself for so fearful a doom of destruction.

But the Scripture suggests that we should “ account the long-suffering of God to be designed for salvation ;” and truly, for how else could any mortal be saved ?—And will guilty men cavil against God’s merciful, long-suffering and patient endurance—the first object of which is the sinner’s salvation ?

Let it be noted also, that as thought of here by Paul, the objection brought against God is, that He endures abuse from sinners with much long-suffering, *in order that he may bring moral good out of their sin*;—in his own words—that he may “ show his wrath and make his power known,”—and in the ease of the saved—that he may “ make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy.”

Objector is not pleased that God should make use of the sins of men as a power against more sinning ; and of the repentance and faith of men as an inducement to more obedience. But as we have seen, this is one of those things in which God has a will of his own, against which it were forever in vain for the wicked to rebel.

In like manner God claims his right to make known the riches of his glory [benevolence] upon the vessels of mercy—the word “vessel” here also looking toward v. 21.

“Whom he hath afore prepared”—*i. e.* by the agencies of his truth and grace.

24. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles ?

25. As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people ; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26. And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people ; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Which applies to all whom God hath called (in the sense of Rom. 8: 30), whether from Jews or Gentiles. Paul then cites Hos. 1: 10, and 2: 23, to show that God called some from the Gentiles as well as some from the Jews—from Gentiles never before known as his people or as his beloved, but now become his beloved ones.

The calling of any Gentiles (it should be remembered), was squarely opposed to the doctrine of the Pharisees—*viz.* that God’s electing grace called in *all* the seed of Abraham without fail, but none other—never a Gentile !

27. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved :

28. For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness : because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

The doctrine here is—Not *all* even of the Jews ; in fact, only a minor portion ; for though their number were

as the sand, yet a remnant only should be saved—authority for which he finds in Isa. 10: 22, 23. Short, quick and terrible would be the retribution that would cut off the guilty masses for their sin.—V. 29 is taken from Isa. 1: 9.

30. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone;

33. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

What then, is the conclusion to which we come? This:—that the Gentiles who as a body had not sought righteousness, in the sense of the Pharisees, had yet attained to righteousness before God by faith in Jesus Christ—illustrations of which appear repeatedly in the history of Paul's gospel labors (*e. g.* Acts 13: 44–48, and 17: 4, and 18: 4–6, and 28: 23–28).

But Israel, the Jews—long following after the righteousness of the law in the Pharisaic sense—had come utterly short of attaining righteousness, because they sought it not by faith in Christ, but only by punctilious and proud works of law. Alas! they stumbled over the Messiah—thought of as a stone upon which unbelievers in him must stumble and fall to their destruction. (So Isa. 8: 14, 15, and 28: 16).—How this very frequent symbol is used by our Lord, may be seen Matt. 21: 42–44, and Luke 20: 15–18. “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

CHAPTER X.

THE central thought of this chapter, is that many of the Jews were disowning Christ in unbelief, and that Gentiles were coming into Christ's kingdom by faith. Collateral points are—The grand mistake of the Jews in seeking salvation by punctilious observance of law (v. 2, 3); ignoring Christ as meeting the true ends of law in the point of bringing men into intrinsic righteousness (v. 4); the righteousness of law, and the righteousness which is by faith placed in contrast, and the latter specially explained (v. 5–10); the salvation by faith sure to those who humbly call upon God (v. 11–13);—prayerfully calling upon God presupposes hearing and preaching (v. 14, 15); but many Jews have heard who have not yet believed (v. 16–18); the reception of Gentiles long since predicted (v. 19–21).

1. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

The older manuscripts read—not “for Israel” but “for them;”—thus: “Brethren the good will of my heart and the prayer to God for them [is] for their salvation.” Having occasion to say things exceedingly distasteful to their nationed pride, it was every way pertinent that he should express kind feelings and even strong love for his countrymen.—To their credit I can testify that they have an earnest zeal for God. But in sadness I am compelled to say—not an *intelligent* zeal—but rather a zeal *not* regulated by knowledge of most vital truths.

3. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

4. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

“God's righteousness” here in the same sense as generally throughout this epistle and particularly in its very opening (1: 17); *viz.* God's mode of making men intrinsi-

cally righteous at heart, and also of justifying them before the law through faith in Christ. The Jews being ignorant of this mode, and seeking laboriously to establish a mode of their own, have not yielded their submission to God's method. Enamored of their own system, they have been blind to the moral beauty and unbelieving as to the truth of God's far better way. For they have quite failed to see that Christ accomplishes the very end sought by the law, with reference to every true believer. Of course the primary end of all law is virtue, goodness—to be secured by inducing perfect obedience. In Christ this perfect obedience is secured far more surely, far more fully, under the operation of more effective principles, bringing in a richer, purer moral power. So much in the line of moral transformation of character. Then, moreover, for the purpose of justification for sinners before the law, Christ provides through his atonement for the fullest and freest pardon of sin—a result for which mere law makes no provision, and in its very nature never can,—Hence every requisite for salvation is provided perfectly in Christ.

5. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise; Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*.)

7. Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).

8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The close translation of v 5. is ; “ For Moses wrote that the man who fulfills the righteousness which is of law shall

live in it" *i. e.* by means of it. Perfect obedience ensures life—his highest well-being.

Over against this, Paul presents in a very striking way the righteousness which is reached through faith. He comprises all in two main things ; (a) Belief with the heart ; (b). Confession with the lips ;—the things believed in being—the Lord Jesus whom God hath raised from the dead ; and confession with the mouth being apparently made prominent here as a testimony to the sincerity and heartiness of this belief. It should be remembered that in those times confession with the lips had a significance little known and not easily over-estimated now. Often it carried with it the loss of all for Christ.—Very noticeable is the stress laid upon "*believing with the heart,*" in the sense of most sincere belief, coupled with the thorough obedience of the soul to the legitimate demands of the truth believed.

The thoughtful reader will ask.—What does Paul mean in vs; 6–8 ? What bearing has all this upon the righteousness of faith ?

Briefly put, I take the answer to be this : Paul wishes to show that gospel faith is exceedingly simple, and to all honestly enquiring minds, very easily intelligible. The subject is not too lofty to be understood, so that some one must needs ascend to heaven to bring down Christ to some nearer point of observation : it is not, so profound that Christ must needs be brought up from the great abyss, in order to come within the range of human knowledge ; but it is very nigh thee, close at hand, readily seen ; readily comprehended. This method of setting forth things difficult of apprehension by conceiving them to be in the great heights of heaven above, or in the deep caverns of the earth below, is a Jewish conception. Paul found it in Moses (Deut. 30 : 11–14) ;—“For this commandment which I command thee this day is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that thou shouldst say ; Who shall go up for us to heaven to bring it to us that we may hear it and do it ; Neither is it beyond the sea that thou shouldst say ;—Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” In one point Paul seems to have taken the liberty to change the figure, *i. e.* from going over

the great sea to going down into the great deep—apparently to make it suggest more naturally the bringing up of Christ again from the dead. The change is only of the letter ; not of the spirit.

Now as to the point of this illustration, nothing can be more clear. It is just this—that *believing in Christ is a perfectly simple thing*; has in it nothing mysterious, nothing abstruse and incomprehensible ; is a matter which a very child may understand. It is very nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart—this doctrine of faith which we preach. It is but to confess the Lord Jesus as the promised Messiah, the proffered Redeemer of men, and with thy heart believe on him for the salvation he comes to bring ;—that is all. You receive him for what he is ; you accept him as to all he brings to you ; you give him your heart and your life. You trust him as your Saviour. This is believing unto righteousness ; the result of such faith is salvation from sin in the heart and also salvation from the curse of the broken law. Jesus sanctifies ; Jesus justifies. In the final result, Jesus glorifies. There is nothing beyond these that human souls can need.

11. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

These verses meet the question supposably put by the Pharisaic Jew ;—Do you really undertake to say that so simple a thing as believing with the heart on Christ will save the soul ?—Indeed I do—Paul answers—for the Scripture hath said—“No one who believeth on him (Christ) shall ever be put to shame” (Isa. 28: 16.) [See the same quotation back in 9: 33]. [Paul quotes here from the Septuagint]. The question may be raised whether Isaiah said these words of the nation’s Messiah. I see no good reason to doubt that he did. [See my Notes on the passage]. Yet even if Isaiah had no immediate reference to the Messiah, the quotation is still good authority for Paul ; because faith in God’s existence, love, and providence under

the Old Testament dispensation is essentially the same thing as faith in Christ under the New. In the former, no trusting one was ever put to shame ; and for the same reason the same must be true in the latter.

All this applies—Paul proceeds to say—to Jew and to Greek alike ; for God makes no difference between men on the score of nationality. The same Lord over all is rich [in mercy] toward all who call upon him—a fact of which he brings proof from the prophet (Joel 2 : 32)—who certainly looked down into the Gospel age, and whose words seem to have breathed the inspirations of spiritual power into the souls of the Apostles at the great Pentecost—to which they so definitely refer.

14. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ?

15. And how shall they preach, except they be sent ? as it is written. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things !

It does not materially affect the sense whether we take these verses as the words of a supposed objector, or as Paul's own.

In the former case, thus :—You have reduced the conditions of salvation by faith to one very simple thing, viz. calling on the name of the Lord Jesus. But it still remains to ask ; How can men call on One in whom they have not believed ? How can they believe in One of whom they have heard nothing ? How can they hear until some one shall speak, making the proclamation ? And how shall men make this gospel proclamation—as apostles—except they be sent forth ? But this chain of questions bears so directly upon the commission of the apostles to preach Christ that it may best be attributed to Paul himself—raising the questions, for himself to answer.—Then in v. 15. the series culminates in a passage from Isaiah (52 : 7) which suggested by the analogous glad tidings of a nearer deliverance, looks down into the gospel age for a more remote one whose messengers of glad tidings bring the real gospel message.

16. But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17. So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Easy and simple as the gospel scheme is, it is yet a sad fact that many of my beloved countrymen who have heard, have yet not obeyed. This very fact was predicted by Isaiah in a passage which most remarkably puts its prediction of the gospel age into historic form and makes the gospel preacher testify ;—“Lord, who hath believed our gospel message ?” (Isa. 53 : 1). Faith does indeed come by hearing and hearing by the word of God ; but unbelief shuts off multitudes who yet have had every facility for hearing and believing unto everlasting life.

18. But I say, Have they not heard ? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

The objector is again present in Paul’s thought, complaining,—But our people have not heard the gospel !—Paul replies, Indeed they have. Multitudes—perhaps he means to imply, the masses—have heard, or might have heard if only they would.

Noticeably Paul’s words appear in Ps. 19: 2 ; but Paul does not appeal to them as scripture authority to the point he is making. He simply takes the words as fitly expressing his sentiments, as if he would say.—This gospel word sounded forth over all Judea and to the ends of the earth even as the witnessing testimony of the heavens declaring the glory of God goes forth all abroad with the light of his sun in the heavens.

19. But I say, Did not Israel know ? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you.

20. But Esaias is very bold and saith, I was found of them that sought me not ; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

The objector may be supposed to put another point

here ; *viz.* that this doctrine of the calling of Gentiles is new—sprung upon our nation all suddenly and extremely to our disgust, repelling many of our good people from believing in Christ.—To which Paul answers ;—Do you say that this is new doctrine ? Look into your own prophecies, even through Moses (first of all) (Deut. 32: 21) the Lord said :—“I will provoke you to jealousy by those whom you now regard as nobody.”—Your own Isaiah is still more bold :—“I was found of them that through the long ages of the past had never sought me” (65: 1); but of Israel he said—“All the day long have I stretched forth my hands to a people unbelieving and gainsaying” (65: 2).—If then this prevalent unbelief of Jews and this calling in of Gentiles are both delicate, critical, offensive points to you, there is my authority in your own scriptures. The facts are painful to you I know ; but how can you deny their truth ?



CHAPTER XI.

THE tone of this chapter is consolatory and hopeful as to the Jews, for God has not cast them away utterly and forever (v. 1-4)—a remnant are being saved even now through the election of grace (v. 5, 6) ; the kind of righteousness, which they have sought, they have failed to attain, and, rejecting Christ, they have been left to their blind infatuation (v. 7-10) ; their fall opened the way for the conversion of the Gentiles ; much more will their recovery be life from the dead to the Gentile world (v. 11-16) ; Gentiles admonished against pride (v. 17-21) ; God’s goodness and severity are both illustrated (v. 22-24) ; continued blindness will rest on Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles is brought in ; and then all Israel shall be saved (v. 25-29) ; how God turns to account the guilty unbelief of Jews to effect the conversion of Gentiles (v. 30-32) ; whereupon Paul extols the depth of the riches, wisdom and knowledge of God and ascribes to Him all glory forever.

1. I say then, Hath God cast away his people ? God

forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

2. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3. Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal*.

The point of this question turns upon the strong significance of the verb "*cast away*;"—Hath God cast them away *utterly* and *forever*, past all reversal or even alleviation? No verily; let not this be supposed! My own case proves what I say. One exception, especially of such a sinner as I, suffices to show that God can yet have mercy on the sons of Israel.—The deep depression that came upon Elijah—almost to the point of despair—drew forth an answer from the Lord which holds good still for all his discouraged people, of small faith; Know ye not what the scripture saith in the passage about Elijah (1. Kings 19: 10-18)—how he "*made intercession with God against Israel*," and God assured him he "*had even then seven thousand men in reserve who had never bent the knee to Baal?*"—If there were at the date of Paul's writing some honest souls in Israel, oppressed with the apparent hopelessness of their nation's destiny, these words must have been exceedingly pertinent toward hope.

5. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6. And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

A remnant of Israel even then remained for God—this fact being not due to their works of righteousness but to the riches of God's mercy. As a nation they had sought acceptance before God on the basis of their works—only to

fail utterly. But on the score of divine mercy, a remnant had been called and saved.

7. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded,

8. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

9. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them:

10. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

The same sentiment is reiterated here;—Israel not at all obtaining the salvation they sought, by means of meritorious works;—only the elect few obtaining this salvation and they on the ground of mercy alone;—the rest being given up to their guilty infatuation—to illustrate which Paul quotes Isa. 29:10, and Ps. 69:22, 23.

11. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

12. Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fullness?

13. For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14. If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them.

15. For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead?

16. For if the first fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

What are the divinely purposed results of this fall of the Jews through their national unbelief? What incidental good does the Lord educe from it? Did it contemplate their utter ruin and nothing else?

Nay verily ;—away with that thought ! Rather, it has been God's purpose through their fall to bring salvation to the Gentiles—this moreover to react ultimately upon Jews by way of emulation, to stimulate them thus to receive the gospel.—The history of Paul's gospel labors alone shows abundantly that the unbelief of the Jews availed toward giving the gospel to the Gentiles ;—for uniformly Paul turned away from his unbelieving countrymen to preach the gospel successfully to the Gentiles—(and they received it).—At the same time it seems to have been his hope and expectation that the manifold and manifest blessings which came to Gentiles through receiving the gospel would in due time open Jewish eyes to the preciousness of the gospel and Jewish hearts to its reception.

In v. 12 Paul moves on logically to other and larger results. If the fall of the Jews becomes the enriching of the Gentile world, and their loss—their impoverishment—becomes riches to the Gentile nations, by how much more shall their *fulness* [their final and general reception of the gospel] bring glory to the Gentile world ! I say this for its bearing upon you, Gentiles, inasmuch as I am an Apostle of the Gentiles. God having made this my special mission (Acts 26: 17, 18), I glorify my office. I delight to bring out the richness of God's plans of mercy toward Gentiles, if by any means I may provoke my kindred to emulation, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection because of their national unbelief enured to the reconciling of the Gentiles, what shall their reception again be but life from the dead ?

This phrase—“life from the dead”—I must take in its figurative sense—the figure coming from the vital forces which spring up out of the death, the decomposition of seed—a fact in nature beautifully significant of power generated out of death for the purposes of new and glorious life. Compare its use by our Lord (John 12: 24)—a case which may have been in Paul's mind. The point upon which this figure bears is the revivifying of gospel energy upon the wide world, to result from the great ingathering of God's ancient Israel.

The doctrine of v. 16 would then be ;—If the first results of God's plan are rich, effective, glorious—so and much more will its ultimate results be. If the rejection of Jews brought on the great conversion of Gentiles, much

more will their reception into God's kingdom bring new life to Zion !

"The first fruits" were a small portion of the dough, set apart for a thank-offering.* These were of course a specimen of the mass—of the same character, and serving to show what the body of the mass would be. So the nature of the root passed into the branch and served to fix its true character.

The logical application of v. 16, I take to be—if the first results of God's plan are so pure and so grand, not less so will the last results—upon the mass—prove ultimately to be. The small specimen we see now will not deceive us.

The clause—"life from the dead," some critics take in its literal sense—the resurrection of the body. They understand Paul to teach here that this final resurrection will follow close upon the ultimate conversion of the Jews. But to this construction there are grave objections;—e.g. that this idea is entirely aside from Paul's course of thought in this chapter, not the least allusion to it elsewhere being apparent; and the whole drift of his argument being toward the effectiveness of God's scheme for the moral regeneration of the world, Jew and Gentile: also that the figurative sense is pertinent, forcible, unobjectionable.

17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

18. Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

21. For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

This playing upon the quick sensibilities of human souls,

* See Num. 15: 20 where the Septuagint brings together Paul's two words—"first fruits" and "lump," i. e. the mass of dough of which the first fruits were a small portion.

and especially upon strong national feelings and prejudices, was a very delicate operation—of which fact Paul's deep insight into human nature gave him a keen perception.—To magnify his office in behalf of Gentiles, he has been directing his arguments to them (v. 13 and onward) his purpose being to inspire them to improve to the utmost their present opportunity to come into God's kingdom by the engrafting process;—but suddenly a new danger suggests itself to his mind—that of spiritual pride in Gentile souls, in view of the new distinction they are attaining in Zion. Put in as a new graft among the old branches and taking on a fresh youthful vigor (a fact well known to nursery men)—throwing the old stock quite into the shade, they are under temptation to boast against the old branches. Let them remember, they are not upholding the root but the root them. Again, let not their proud heart say; The old branches were broken off to give me a place as a thing of better quality and of fresher vigor. Let them remember the Jew lost his place by his unbelief; they could hold theirs only by faith, coupled with modest humility. Let them beware; “If God spared not the natural branches, he will not spare thee.” So the older textual authorities read the last clause, very explicitly—“He will not spare thee.” Proud unbelief would forfeit God's favor in your case as surely and as suddenly as in the case of the Jew.

This figure—grafting new, improved varieties upon old standards—is in many points exquisitely pertinent to the case Paul has in hand—the introduction of Gentile shoots into the decaying Jewish trunk.—“Graff” in our Auth. version for “graft,” is now obsolete.

22. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.

24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

The case illustrates two distinct and in a sort contrasted qualities in the divine character ; his “goodness,” and his “severity,”—the latter word signifying rather that firmness of nerve which holds with steady hand and uses with unflinching purpose the surgeon’s knife when he must. [Gr. *apotomia*.]—Toward those that fall through unbelief, severity in this sense ; toward thee, the Gentile, goodness if thou continue in that good moral state which is in sympathy with God’s kindness and grace to thee. Otherwise—*i.e.* in case thou dost not continue in that state, thou too shalt be cut off. So also, if the Jews turn to God from their unbelief, they shall be grafted in again. God is infinitely able to do this ; indeed it is specially according to nature—a most natural thing to be done—to re-engage them into their own original olive tree. It must be a special gratification to the God of the old patriarchs and prophets to bring back their far remote descendants from their long estrangement of unbelief into the Zion of their earliest forefathers.

25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

26. And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob :

27. For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

28. As concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sakes : but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers’ sakes.

29. For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

The “brethren” specially addressed here are Gentiles, as in V. 13 and onward to this point.—The truth now to be presented, called a “mystery” because long mostly unknown, Paul is specially desirous they should understand. It is not only a glorious truth in itself, but might be particularly useful to them to abate their danger of self-conceit. It would show Gentile Christians that the Lord had great plans of mercy for the Jews as a whole people.

Therefore they need not conceive of themselves as destined thenceforward to bear alone the distinction and glory of being the people of God.

The great truth referred to was that partial blindness in unbelief had befallen Israel and would abide upon them until the fulness of the Gentiles should be brought into God's kingdom ;—then, so, upon this plan, all Israel should be saved—according to those words of Isaiah [59 : 20] :—“The Deliverer shall go forth from Zion and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant with them from me when I shall take away their sin.”—In this quotation Paul follows closely the Septuagint which differs slightly from the Hebrew and from our Auth. version—the latter being—“Unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob”—*i. e.* shall come unto those in Jacob who turn from their transgressions :—while Paul (with the Septuagint) makes more prominent the active agency of God in turning them from their transgressions. The Deliverer shall come to Zion and shall do precisely this—shall turn the whole people of Jacob from their sin.

The allusion to “my covenant” (v. 27) may possibly be to the same passage of Isaiah (59 : 21) in which we read—“As for me, this is *my covenant* with them saith the Lord : My Spirit that is upon thee and my word which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart,” etc. This is plainly a promise of Messianic blessings, yet the special point made is the gift of the Spirit.

The allusion may, however, be to the “new covenant” which stands on record Jer. 31 : 31–34, and is brought out most fully in Heb. 8—this being in every point appropriate to Paul’s purpose, meeting all the exigencies of his allusion—(“when I shall take away their sin”)—and of his entire argument. “Behold the days come that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, *viz.* this ;—“I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people ; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord ; for they shall *all know me* from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord ;—for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.”—These last words seem to identify this passage from Jeremiah as the one to which Paul alluded.

Reverting to the great truth here brought forth from

its hiding-place of “mystery,” we must note that it is precisely Paul’s inspired interpretation of Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s prophecies on the point of the future conversion of Jews and Gentiles ; and makes these well defined points :

1. That the then existing unbelief of Israel would continue upon them as a nation for yet a season ;

2. That it would end and give place to gospel faith when the mass of the Gentiles should become converted to Christ ;

3. That consequently the conversion of the Gentile world is certainly in the plan of God, the fulness of their conversion being the ripened result of the work already in progress, of which Paul was under God an apostle.

4. Finally, that when the fulness of Gentile conversion should have been accomplished, *all Israel should be saved* —in proof of which he finds predictions in both Isaiah and Jeremiah which are entirely explicit, and are strong and unqualified as human words can make.

The candid reader will have no need of the suggestion that this passage shows decisively how Paul interpreted the ancient Messianic prophecies of Christ’s earthly kingdom, and of the final triumphs of the gospel.

In v. 28, Paul looks to the present bearings of these features in the plan of God. In respect to the diffusion of the gospel, the Jews took the attitude of hostility, for the good of the Gentiles, their hostile unbelief being overruled of God to the more extensive conversion of the Gentiles ; but on the other hand, as the result of God’s electing love to their fathers (the ancient patriarchs) they were beloved, and should ultimately be brought back to God. For the gifts and the gospel call of God are changeless ; they stand forever of old and onward to the end of time.

30. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief :

31. Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

32. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

These verses essentially repeat the points already made in reference to the incidental purposes and results of God’s scheme. As ye Gentiles were through long ages in

disobedient unbelief toward God but have now found mercy as a remote result of Jewish unbelief ; so these Jews are now unbelieving so that through mercy shown you they may now obtain mercy. For God has shut up all in unbelief ; first the Gentiles : last the Jews ; that in the final result he may have mercy upon all. It is a wonderful scheme—this over-ruling the unbelief of the Jew for the salvation of the Gentile, and then making this mercy shown the Gentile a moral force toward the salvation of the Jew.—So it is once more made decisively clear that, in Paul's thought, the ultimate result of the gospel scheme upon the race will be that *God's mercy comes upon all*—in the day of fulfilled prophecy, when all that the great love of God has moved him to plan and to accomplish shall be complete, and both Gentile and Jew shall “know the Lord from the least to the greatest.”

33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out !

34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ?

35. Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ?

36. For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things ; to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

The full heart of the apostle pours forth its admiration of God in these memorable words. All God's plans—long mysterious ; long unfathomed by human thought ; long dark and perplexing—at last culminate in victory for truth and righteousness—victory for Zion and her King ! The unbelief which seemed so impregnable, so deadly hostile to the gospel's progress, and as related to God's plan for the world's redemption, so difficult for human wisdom to account for, is forced at last to lend its utmost moral force to hasten the grand consummation and to make it perfect and all-glorious.

Oh the depth of the riches, of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments (this word in the sense of plans of operation) ; how untraceable his ways !

Paul's words seem really to make three distinct points,

and not (as our Anth. version) but two—*viz.* riches (*i. e.* grace); wisdom; knowledge. The great depth of each and of all these qualities is the theme of his irrepressible admiration. His thought is mainly upon wisdom and knowledge as evinced in the marvellous skill and resources of God's moral scheme of redemption. This appears in the argument that follows:—*for* who has ever known (fully fathomed) the *mind*—the infinite intelligence—of God? “Who has been his counsellor,” to give him advice and to aid him in framing these wise plans? Who has given to him any new thought, so that God has come under obligation to reward him for his wise suggestion?

Because forth *from Him* as Creator come all things great and good; *through Him* by virtue of his perpetual efficiency are all things; *unto Him* as their final end are all things made to bear:—therefore unto him be all glory forever: Amen.

To this consummation, full of infinite reason and of ineffable sublimity, Paul's conception of God's ways in the great scheme of human salvation have brought him.



CHAPTER XII.

THE second part of this great epistle commences here—the first part, devoted to gospel truth—the great doctrines which are unto salvation, closing with the previous chapter. Here therefore Paul opens the practical part, bearing upon the various duties of the Christian life.

Sensibly and most pertinently, all christian life begins with supreme consecration to the service of God (v. 1); involving the solemn purpose and the earnest endeavor to conform both the spirit and the life—not to the world, but to the perfect will of God (v. 2). Against undue self-esteem and unto the doing each of his own several duties (v. 3–5). As the gifts of grace are various, let each devote his own gifts and talents to the service of God (v. 6–8). Exhortation to love and to all forms of well doing (v. 9–17); to living peaceably and in kindness toward even enemies (v. 18–21).

1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

2. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Paul assumed that the reader of this chapter has already read the chapters preceding this, and therefore has before his mind all those exceeding great mercies which are embosomed in the glorious gospel scheme. The righteousness of God by faith in Christ; peace with God; a state exempt from all condemnation before the law; a living union with Christ; the indwelling Spirit; victory over sin; all things working together for good and glory unspeakable in the future world;—What could be greater and what more can be added to swell the volume of these mercies of God to the uttermost limit possible for mortals to receive!—By all these mercies, therefore, (says Paul), I beseech you that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, in holiness such as is acceptable to him—all which is your reasonable service, reasonably due from you to God in return for so great mercies. The figure comes from the Jewish sacrifices—supposably from the “whole burnt offering,” the significance of which was the consecration of all to God. In the case of animals offered to God in sacrifice, their life was taken and their flesh, being consecrated to God, was consumed on the altar, or used appropriately in modes prescribed.—But in the case of Christian men presenting their bodies, the sacrifice was to be a “living” one. Of course the “body” is spoken of (“present your *bodies*”) because the figure before the mind—animals offered in sacrifice—suggested the consecration of the *body*. But, of his intelligent creatures God asks, not the body only or mainly, but the spirit primarily—the very soul—as Paul proceeds immediately to show. The consecration of even our bodily members and organs is to be made, not by laying human flesh upon an altar of stone, but by the willing, loving devotion—the consecration by act of mind, of all we have and all we are to the service of God.

“Conformed” and “transformed,” conceive of men as having in themselves a power to shape their own free ac-

tivities and their own voluntary character. It supposes them competent on the one hand to resist and rule out of their souls the spirit of the world ; and on the other, to transform their own heart and life into harmony with the perfect will of God.—Let it not be thought however, that this power of self-renovation and self-culture will be applied to purpose and with all success, without the help of the Spirit and the truth of God. Rather the gospel theory is—Nothing without God's Spirit as our renewing help ;—everything with and by means of Christ dwelling in us by his Spirit, “I can do all things through Christ strengthening.”—Let it then be well borne in mind that this offering of ourselves a living sacrifice holy unto God carries with it the *not* being conformed to this world, on the one hand ; and on the other, the being transformed by the constant renewing of the mind so as to make full proof of what the will of God is—*viz.*, that which is good, well pleasing [unto him], and therefore wanting in nothing.—The word “prove” [“that ye may *prove*”] is very expressive. It means—that ye may make full proof of in your own experience—that ye not only make the trial, but really *accomplish* the thing ye try to do—prove it in your own experience.—In Eph. 5 : 10 Paul has the same word as here,—“*Proving* what is well pleasing to the Lord.”

3. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think ; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

4. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office :

5. So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

By virtue of the grace given him as an apostle, Paul speaks to every one of them—said perhaps with an eye not only to his authority as an apostle but to the grace of wisdom and knowledge with which God had endowed him for his apostleship. Exercising this grace of wisdom, Paul exhorts them not to overestimate themselves—that no one think more highly of himself than he ought—*i. e.* than truth will warrant ; but aim at a sober-minded estimate

“according as God had imparted to each his own measure of faith (in the sense of Christian worth.)—As in our own human body there are many members, but not all with the same functions—not all for the same service, so in the church—we, being many, are one body, and severally are members of one another. Whatever gifts we have belong to the church rather than to ourselves, and should be used in behalf of the church for that service to which they are adapted.

The point here made—“Every one members one of another”—is well illustrated by a case somewhere reported of a strong-limbed blind man carrying on his back a crippled but well-seeing boy. Here was one good pair of legs for the two and one good pair of eyes. This man and this boy were members one of another, the eyes belonging as much to the man as to the boy, while the strong limbs served the boy as truly as the man. And the kind helpful feeling in both parties would be entirely vital to their mutual well-being.—Very like this in the church, the gifts of each one become the common property of all. Whoever has any one quality in superior degree should hold and use it for the common welfare of the whole body. Thus by love should men and women in their church relations serve one another.—In 1 Cor. 12 Paul has expanded fully this central idea—diversity of gifts, sacred to the use of the whole church, the idea being carried out as here under the figure of the many members of the human body.

6. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

7. Or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8. Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The numerous Italic words here indicate that Paul’s sentence is very elliptical, omitting many words. Yet our auth. version doubtless gives the sense correctly.

These “*gifts*,”—of the Apostolic age—were special endowments from the Holy Ghost, differing from each other according to the grace given—for this diversity was of God’s

wisdom—for the purposes we may assume—(a) of utilizing to the best purpose the original native endowments among the members of the church ; and (b) Of cultivating and developing mutual helpfulness—the love of all the brethren and of the one common cause and kingdom of the Master. Foremost of these stand “prophecy” which it is well to notice Paul valued very highly, apparently above all the other spiritual gifts of this class. (See 1 Cor. 13 : 2 and 14 : 1, 3, 4, 5). “Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy.” “He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort.” “Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.”—In its ordinary exercise it did not involve the prediction of future events, and was broadly distinguished from speaking with other tongues ; but it did involve a special unction for preaching. Meyer has well defined it—“An activity of the mind [nous] enlightened and filled with the consecration of the Spirit’s power, disclosing hidden things and profoundly seizing, chastening, elevating, carrying away men’s hearts.”

Let the brother who has this gift of prophecy exercise it according to the quality and measure of the grace given him—this phrase, proportion of faith [Gr. analogia], being obviously in the same sense as “measure of faith” (v. 3).—In v. 7 the “minister” is not the preacher but the *deacon*, the sense of the word “deacon” being *servant*, or minister of the church. Originally, he had the function of caring for and dispensing the temporalities of the church (Acts 6). If this be his office, let him devote himself to it faithfully. So also the teacher to his teaching, and the exhorter to his service of exhortation.—“He that giveth” is not here the man who makes a donation out of his own property, but he who *disburses*, distributes, the alms of the church entrusted to his keeping. If benefaction were the sense, benevolence should be the motive and wisdom the guiding principle ; but here we notice that the quality of mind to be called into exercise is “*simplicity*,”—exemption from all sinister aims. Let him look only at the naked merits of each case, with no partiality, no respect of persons.—The “ruling” one is the man put in charge—*presiding* over some responsible trust. In some passages this word signifies presiding over assemblies of

men ; while in other cases, it seems to signify the responsible charge of some service or work. The quality of *diligence* seems more appropriate to the latter than the former.—The “showing of mercy,” is of course, said here of men, not of God ; and of men, not in their functions as civil officers who might have the pardoning power ; but far more probably, of those who were called to some service of sympathy, compassion (*e. g.*) in help of the suffering. Let such fulfil this service with cheerfulness. It might be very unpleasant, very disagreeable ; but let them give large place to the impulses of humanity, pity, compassion ; and be cheerful in it all.—The question will arise;—Is Paul describing the duty which belongs to the distinct, well defined *offices* existing in the primitive church ; or rather, the unofficial service for which the Spirit might give various brethren special qualifications, and which, therefore, they were to perform as occasion might call : Or may a part of these directions refer to distinct offices, and the rest apply to miscellaneous services to be performed by such as had the requisite qualifications ?—Of these alternatives the last seems to me most probable. The prophet and the deacon; perhaps also the teacher and the exhorter, fell into distinct orders of office;—at least this seems to have been usually the case. But the general drift of the context looks manifestly toward the doctrine of thorough consecration to God of whatever power or gift, native or specially imparted, each one of the members of the church might have.

9. *Let love be without dissimulation.* Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

10. *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;* in honor preferring one another;

11. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Love appropriately leads the train of Christian virtues—love in the sense of good will, real benevolence. Let this love be unhypocritical, real with no mere pretences ; the love of the heart and not the vain show of it.

Abhor the evil ; cleave to the good. Turn with utmost aversion from whatever is evil ; let all your proclivities be toward and unto the good.—In brotherly love be affectionate toward each other ; outdo each other, if possible, in mutual respect for others. Let this be your ambition—to surpass all in the deference and respect ye manifest toward others.—In matters requiring diligence never slothful ; in spirit, evermore fervent ; rendering service to the Lord and doing all things as unto him.—Under all circumstances rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ; constant in prayer (“praying always with all prayer and supplication”):—imparting freely to meet the necessities of the saints ; making their interests common with your own. Also, honor diligently the claims of hospitality.

14. Bless them which persecute you : bless, and curse not.

15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Paul is wholly with his Great Master in this wonderful precept :—“Bless them that persecute you ; bless—curse never.” So Jesus taught : “Love your enemies ; bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you ; pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven” (Mat. 5: 44, 45).—Thus the law of the christian life not only surpasses the best human morality ;—it distances it utterly ; eclipses it totally, throwing all else into the shade. And really it leaves no place at all for ill will, resentment ; but peremptorily demands pure and perfect love always and everywhere ; toward all men, despite of whatsoever provocation to the contrary.

Your proper bearing toward enemies is put thus in fewest but most forceful words, in v. 14. Your bearing toward friends—all other than enemies—in v. 15. Rejoice with the joyful ; weep with the sorrowing ; let your heart be full of sympathy, all its affections flowing out spontaneously in either the joy or the sorrow of others.—How much of heaven would come down to earth with full-hearted obedience to this simple law !

16. *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind

not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

This first precept—"the same mind one toward another"—might supposably mean—either, the same *continuously*, with affection well sustained and without abatement :—or the same toward *all men*, in all conditions—with no discriminations in favor of the high against the lowly. Inasmuch as the clauses that follow are probably a more full expansion of the sentiment in this, the latter view must have the preference. Be not unduly attracted by the high things, not merely toward persons holding a high social place ; but toward the lowly as well. Paul's words—"condescend to men of low estate" mean—consent to *move along with* the humble. Let your sympathies bear you along in line *with* them and not above them.—To be very wise in your own estimate of yourselves would tend strongly, if not fatally, against obeying these precepts.—The strain of thought in this verse is upon the manifestation of love and sympathy, and not upon the formation of intellectual opinions and views of doctrinal truth. Hence to interpret "being of the same mind one toward another" to mean—Mutually think the same thing : be agreed in your opinions and views—is quite foreign from this current of thought. "One toward another" is not the sphere for forming theoretical opinions. For a man to think his doctrinal opinions, toward, or unto, his fellow-disciples, is scarcely apostolic.

17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Pay back to no man the evil he may have done to thee. Forethoughtfully provide things honorable, becoming, and appropriate, before all men. "Honesty" as usual in the New Testament, in the sense of honorable, appropriate.

18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

There may be men who will not be at peace with you but who will persecute and oppress you. Avoid this if you can : do nothing to provoke but all you reasonably can to conciliate.—It would seem that Paul thinks here of the causeless persecutions which the best of Christians could

neither prevent, avoid, or escape.—But let nothing be ever lacking on their part which can be done conscientiously toward living in peace with all men.

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath : for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Revenge is never a Christian virtue ; can never be right in any human heart or life, and certainly not in the Christian ; for it belongs not to men but to God. Let Him requite ; he has said he would ; and his justice and wisdom are surely equal to any demand which violence and wrong may make upon him. Is he not the moral Governor of all ?—Then let it be your part to ply to the utmost the law of kindness. Feed your enemy, hungry ; give him water for his thirst. So will your retaliation be noble on your part—but terrible upon his sense of honor, manhood, right—if he be not utterly past all moral sensibility.—The passage is quoted from Prov. 25 : 21, 22, ending there with the words—“ And the Lord shall reward thee.”

The conception—“ Coals of fire upon the head ”—seems to have followed the usage of laying the hands upon the head in benediction, as if that were the place to lay blessings ;—but in the case of outrageous wickedness requited with kindness, the blessing put on the head burns in like coals of fire.

This figure may suggest to us that the torment of fire when spoken of the future punishment of the wicked may be, at least in large measure, of this mental sort—the sense of shame and everlasting contempt—a feeling of inexpressible meanness, a consciousness of guilt that refuses to be thrown off, but fastens its terrible grip upon the soul, never to be relaxed ;—the deep conviction of folly for which none else is to blame ; a consciousness of having thrown away the boon of a blessed immortality—for absolutely *nothing* !

Finally, says Paul, let evil never overcome you, but

rather overcome it—all the evil that comes upon you—with good in return. These are the glorious victories of purity and love. Their spirit is godlike ; their fruits in the soul are the very joy of heaven.

CHAPTER XIII.

Conscientious obedience to civil authority because it is ordained of God (v. 1–5) ; cheerful paying of taxes and of all honest dues (v. 6, 7) ; but the debt of love remains ever binding, never exhausted ; and this is itself the fulfilling of all moral law (v. 8–10). Special reasons for wakeful diligence and for a virtuous christian life (v. 11–14).

1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God.

2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Beyond question these higher powers are the civil authorities, the human government, under which Christians at Rome were living. Paul most distinctly recognizes civil government as of divine appointment—in harmony with the will of God. This does not decide which of many possible forms is in God's sight the best, nor who out of the many rival claimants to power has the right on his side. It goes just to the extent of recognizing the principle of civil government as a necessity to well ordered society, and the consequent duty of obedience to its laws. In general the Christian's duty would be—submission to the government which in fact is holding and exercising the functions of civil power.

In the age of Paul, Jewish mind was restive under the Roman yoke—mooting the question of paying tribute to Cesar (Matt. 22 : 17) ; proud of freedom from any foreign yoke, and aspiring all too eagerly to reach and hold it (John 8 : 33). Some were apparently fascinated with the notion that their Messiah would build his kingdom on the com-

mon footing of all human kingdoms and supersede their authority—so exempting his subjects from all allegiance to Gentile dominion. In the Christian churches at least, all notions of this sort must needs be suppressed with a firm hand—the more so because the Roman sway was in fact absolute, and because insubordination must surely incur persecution. If Christianity was to make headway in the Roman Empire, it must be inoffensive. The passive virtues must needs be put boldly in the foreground, conspicuously prominent.

3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

Roman laws were by no means perfect; yet in the main the acts they condemned were bad; the life they approved was good, so that their rod of power was a terror, not to good deeds but to bad. Wouldst thou then be exempt from fear of that rod? Do good, and the law will give thee praise, not blame. For the civil magistrate acts under God and as his minister, at least so far as his law discriminates against wrong doing and in favor of right.—Therefore men should obey the civil law not only through fear of its penalties for disobedience but from conscience toward God.

“Bearing the sword” was the badge of authority, indicating the possession and exercise of the power of life and death—the death-penalty.—On the question of the legitimate right of human government to take life for the highest crimes, it must at least be admitted that in Paul's view, the assertion of this right did not vitiate their authority to rule and to demand obedience for conscience' sake. Paul quietly assumes their right to bear the sword as the death-penalty.

6. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

The right of civil government to exist and to enforce obedience carries with it the right of taxation and the Christian duty of paying taxes. Those rulers are God's ministers, doing useful service for him and therefore entitled to be supported by their subjects.

From this point Paul advances to the broadest generalization: Render to all their dues; meet every honest claim upon you, whether of money or its equivalent, or of the honor due to civil officers. Due honor, being in fact a contribution of small cost, yet of great value to the moral support of government, should by all means be rendered cheerfully.

8. Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

In point of grammatical form the first word of v. 8, “owe,”—might be either indicative or imperative—*i. e.* either—ye do owe nothing to any man but love, for love fulfills all law; or owe ye no man any thing; pay every honest debt.—The former might seem to find some support from the logic of the passage—“*for* love fulfills all law.”—But strongly against this indicative construction are these facts;—(a) That the whole current of thought here is imperative—a series of precepts;—“Pay ye tribute;” “Render to all their dues” *etc.*;—(b). That the sense of the indicative has an air of limitation:—we can never owe any thing but love—which is quite out of harmony with the

drift of the passage, and would lie dangerously open to abuse.—It is better, therefore (with the Auth. version) to retain the imperative ; Owe nothing to any man ; pay every honest debt ; or better still, make no debt—certainly not any debt of doubtful sort as to payment.—Suddenly at this point, the claims of the law of love flash upon Paul's mind, and he subjoins as an after thought :—Owe nothing save the debts of love ; these you can never exhaust—never can pay off so entirely that no more shall remain to be paid. The moral claims of that grand law, all put sensibly into that one precept *love one another*—must endure long as life;—long as society exists ; long as there are fellow-beings whom your love can bless.

In v. 9. Paul would show by specifying the precepts of the decalogue that these forbidden acts violate the law of love and consequently that love does truly fulfil the whole spirit of the law.

The one comprehensive precept—“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”—carries in itself all the prohibitions of the second table of the decalogue—against disrespect to parents ; adultery ; theft, falsehood, covetousness ;—so that all the law might be truthfully put into that affirmative form—*equal and impartial love to all*. Inasmuch as from its nature love must seek evermore “the well-being and never the ill of one's neighbor”—*i. e.* of every one who comes within reach of your acts and influence, therefore, love cannot work any ill to a neighbor, and must be the fulfilling of all law.

In the sense of Paul, love is not merely a tender emotion, but is the good-willing of the heart, honestly, sincerely purposed, and earnestly carried into action for the good and never for the ill of the neighbor who is so near that your loving heart and well-doing hand can reach him. Paul always thinks of this love as “*working*”—not merely weeping emotional tears—but actively laboring to *bless*.

The reader should carefully notice that this love is due to “thy neighbor”—no other condition or qualification being put into this law. He is not assumed to be your *benefactor*—either in the past or hopefully in the future ; *i. e.* this law of loving is not supposed to limit the people to be loved and benefitted to those who have shown favors or good will to you.—Moreover, this “neighbor” is not described as being personally agreeable—a man to your

taste ; or to be on the same social plane with yourself—of the same caste in society. The only mark by which you are to know him is that he is your neighbor—*i. e.* so near to you that your love can reach him with good will and benefactions. This is all that you need to know of him to identify him as the object of your love. And in the application of this rule, there is not the least occasion to measure *distance* in feet or in miles : if the man is within your reach, then love him and do him good. Plainly Paul might have said—Love every body in earth or heaven ; love all sentient beings whose happiness is a good to be sought ; but to put the law in a more practical shape and to lead the thought toward the *good-doing* which the law demands, Paul chose to say—*your neighbor*.

11. And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and in wantonness, not in strife and envying;

14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

To the exercise of this great, broad duty of love, Paul here names some special inducements arising from peculiar circumstances. The *times* were making urgent demands for wakeful energy. Life is not only short but with many might be drawing near its end. As to all of them that wonderful redemption which would come at death was nearer far than when they first believed. Let them live therefore under a sense of the nearness of that other world, and of the very short time that remained for the labors of earth. Men who are coming so near to the light of heaven should repel the works of darkness and turn away with loathing from every thing that breathes the spirit of darkness—from all those deeds of shame that slink away from even the dull vision of human eyes.—A nobler life, congenial to a far purer light, should command their aspirations. Let them put on the spirit and imitate the life of the

Lord Jesus, and no longer plan for a fleshly life but rather for the life of Christ and of heaven.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE whole of this chap. 14 and chap. 15: 1-7, constitute one section and should have been thrown into one chapter. Its single theme is—*How to treat conscientious scruples on points essentially unimportant.*—Of the points indicated here, the eating of flesh stands in the foreground; in the background are the drinking of wine and the observance of days considered sacred.—Scruples of similar sort in regard to eating meat which had been or might have been offered to an idol, appear in 1 Cor. 8-10; and the same christian principles are indicated there as here ; but this passage contains no allusion to that particular occasion for conscientious scruples.

Historically, it seems reasonably certain that the scruples which come to the surface in our passage are traceable to the sect known among the Jews as the Essenes. The important things to notice here, bearing upon the moral questions involved in the case, are that their scruples related to points of no intrinsic importance, yet were honestly held, and therefore took strong hold of tender sensitive consciences.

As between the two parties in the church—the men who had such scruples and the men who had not—the former were in danger of charging sin upon their less scrupulous brethren, and the latter, of treating their super-scrupulous brethren with disrespect or even contempt. Paul comes in to mediate between them—to discuss the moral question which their diverse attitudes involved ; and to apply the christian principles germain to the case.

1. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but not to doubtful disputations.*

The word “faith” must needs be taken here in a very broad sense, substantially equivalent to *christian sentiment*,

views of what constitutes christian duty and the religious life.

“*Weakness*” here is not the opposite of *strength* in the sense of strong convictions of truth, firmness of belief ; but is rather opposed to what is well considered, sensible. They greatly over-estimated the value of their peculiar notions and practices ; their minds were ill informed and their consciences morbidly sensitive on these trivial matters.—A man of this sort, Paul exhorts the brethren to “receive,” *i. e.* to their christian confidence and fellowship—using the same verb here as in the last clause of v. 3; “God hath received him.” As God could bear with his crude notions and sharp, misguided conscience because he had an honest heart, and therefore “*received*” him, so should ye. Men should not be more strict or pure than God.—But do not receive such a man “unto doubtful disputations;” do not take him in to dispute and discuss him into deeper perplexity and greater soreness of conscience ;—for commonly such are not the men to take in new light under vigorous discussion. Paul’s words—“unto doubtful disputations”—I take to mean—critical discussions of opinion reasoned out—based on reasoning.—Whoever will consider the peculiarities of such minds will see that Paul judged wisely in advising against treating them to logical discussion.

2. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth ; yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

5. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Paul gives the sentiments of the men he speaks of and the way to treat them.—One man thinks it right, or at least not wrong, to eat certain kinds of food. Another, being weak—*i. e.* having erroneous views and holding them with morbid conscientiousness, eats only herbs.—The eating man is prone to think his not-eating brother very foolish;

the latter is equally prone to judge his brother who eats all things to be very wicked. This latter being the graver charge and the greater offence, Paul admonishes the man who thus judges his brother that God hath received him and he should not presume to judge another man's servant—*i.e.* a man who honestly serves God as his supreme Master. He stands or falls before this Master; and—God will hold him up if indeed he is an honest servant.

Another point of conscientious diversity is that of regarding certain days specially sacred. On this point also, Paul's doctrine is—Let every man make up his own mind in view of all the light before him, and then act accordingly.

6. He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

7. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

The points which, with so much good sense, or should we not rather say—with so much inspired wisdom from God, Paul makes vital to both these parties are—that they form each his own opinion in all good conscience toward God and act upon it as unto God and unto God only—all under the one supreme purpose of doing the whole will of God. Moreover, that they accept the gifts which God bestows with gratitude to the Great Giver. So living, we none of us live to ourselves but all live unto and for the Lord. Living or dying, we are his supremely, as truly his after death, in the world to come, as before death in this world, because (v. 9) Christ has died and has lived again in exalted reigning life in heaven that He may be supreme Lord of his people, both the dead and the living. Of course it follows that Christ alone is the Lord of every

man's conscience, and no one of his children should usurp his authority in this matter and set up himself to judge his brother.

10. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11. For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

12. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Why shouldst thou usurp the authority and prerogatives of Christ, and erect thy puny judgment seat to pass thy sentence upon thy conscientious brother? We are all to stand before the judgment seat of Christ—no one of us to be the judge of anybody—but every one to be judged by the same Supreme Lord and judge of all. Every man must give account of himself and for himself unto God;—a fact which, duly considered, should impress the conviction that we shall have enough to do in preparation for our personal trial with no time to spare for judging our conscientious brother.—V. 11 is quoted from Isa. 45: 23—which, where it stands must be referred to the submission of the nations to God as their King, and apparently, to their willing, joyful submission under the subduing power of the gospel. The words may well express the subjugation of the moral universe to Christ as final Judge—as Paul applies them here.

13. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

14. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

With a fine play upon the two senses of the word “*judge*,” Paul says—No longer judge one another, usurping Christ's own supreme prerogative; but *judge* this to be the sensible thing; settle this conviction firmly in your mind—never to put a stumbling-block in a brother's way. Take care never to grieve him or cause him to fall.

On the point of any essential distinction as to things reputed clean or unclean, I am persuaded, living in closest sympathy with Christ, that this distinction is null and void and there is nothing in it at all. Yet if a man *supposes* any thing to be morally unclean to him, it is so. That is all.

15. But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18. For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

If thy brother is grieved with thy habits of eating, thy walk before him and as to him is not according to love. Let not thy eating destroy a soul for whom Christ died. This assumes that your course may break down his conscience; may lead him to feel that he need have no conscience, and so he may lose his soul.—Beware, therefore, lest your course may weaken the power of conscience in the case of your brother, inasmuch as he may assume that your conscientious convictions are like his, and consequently that you are reckless of conscience. Take care lest what is really good in you be evil spoken of:—in the present case —lest it be taken as proof that you have no conscientiousness toward God.

Try to make your brethren understand that in your view the kingdom of God consists not in what men eat or drink, nor in what they abstain from eating or drinking; but “in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Labor to disabuse them of their extreme notions of ritualism, and to instal into their place of power just views of the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom. To serve Christ in these things is pleasing to God, and will ultimately approve itself to sensible men.

19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20. For meat destroy not the work of God. All

things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21. *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Still putting the same noble principles in new aspects, Paul urges them to follow what conduces to peace, harmony of feeling, real love ; and mutual edification. God's work of grace in the heart, destroy thou not for the sake of so small a thing as meat. Think of the sacrifice Christ has made for the saving of human souls—and say ; can you not forego all meat, denying yourself if need be this small indulgence in order to promote the interest for which Christ died ;—or at least to avoid thwarting his endeavors and sacrifices for the saving of men ?

All things of this sort are in themselves pure enough ; the evil lies in their being an offence to thy weak brother. Better never to eat any flesh or drink any wine than to offend thy brother's conscience and so cause him to stumble and fall.

22. Hast thou faith ? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

23. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith ; for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

The older manuscripts make a slight change in the construction of the first clause, yet not affecting the sense ;—thus : The faith which thou hast, have to thyself before God.—Enjoy the quiet of mind and the peaceful exemption from the small bondage which these unfortunate scruples impose ; yet at the same time, abstain from indulging yourself openly in any thing which would or might seriously harm your christian brother. Blessed is the man who has no scruples of a weak, ill taught conscience condemning him in what he approves.—But on the other hand, he who doubts—whose conscience does not approve—is condemned if he eats because it is not according to his convictions of right, is not according to his then present conceptions and belief as to his christian duty. Whatever violates or even lacks the support of these convictions, is

sin. *Men must live according to their convictions of personal duty.* God does not demand of us that these ideas of duty be objectively perfect; but he does require, that having formed them honestly and with the best light and the best wisdom at our command, we should obey them implicitly. Obedience to our best convictions thus formed is in our case obedience to God. To disregard them is to disown God's authority.



CHAPTER XV.

THE chapter opens with a paragraph (v. 1-7) to close the topic of chap. 14; and then proceeds to speak at some length of the calling of the Gentiles; of his great commission to preach the gospel to them; of his success; and of his future plans of missionary labor.

1. We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.
2. Let every one of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good to edification.
3. For even Christ pleased not himself: but as it is written; The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.
4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.
5. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:
6. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

These are the practical inferences and applications of truth to duty, from the premises laid down in the previous chapter, all enforced by the pertinent and precious example of our self-sacrificing Redeemer.—Let us regard our per-

sonal self-indulgence as of the very smallest account when measured against the spiritual welfare of our weak brethren. Jesus did not please himself, but as the scripture (Ps. 69: 10) long before said, bore with never failing patience whatever reproaches came upon him in the service of God.—Paul's prayer (v. 5, 6) that “ye be like-minded one toward another so that with one mind and one mouth ye may glorify God”—makes emphatic the universality of this spirit—that *all of every class*—the weak in faith and the strong also—may be filled with this spirit of mutual fellowship and confidence—of tender regard, moreover to each other's spiritual welfare, ever watchful against offences, dangerous to the soul; careful not to please every man himself, but every man his neighbor for his good to edification. So should they receive one another into the warm sympathies of christian fellowship, even as Christ receives us all to the glory of God.

8. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made unto the fathers*:

9. And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

“For I say” [“for” better than “now,”]—not only calls special attention to what he is about to say, but connects it logically with what precedes. This logical connection will become apparent if it be assumed that the party of weak faith were of Jewish antecedents, and their brethren of strong faith were chiefly of Gentile—a distinction sustained by the fact that sacred days were one of the points of extra conscientiousness, not to say also, by the very circumstance of so much development of a ritualistic conscience.

Having finished what he wished to say as to the relative

duties of those two classes, he proceeds here to speak at some length upon the relation of Gentiles to the gospel scheme.

First, that Jesus Christ became specially the servant of the circumcised Jews, devoting his personal labors in preaching the truth of God to them almost exclusively, yet all with the broadly comprehensive purpose of “confirming the promises made to the fathers,” which (be it well considered) very distinctly taught that Gentiles no less than Jews were to “glorify God for his mercy.” This truth Paul here confirms by four successive quotations from the ancient prophets :

(a.) From Ps. 18: 49 (the same in 2 Sam. 22: 50) ; “Therefore will I give thanks to thee, O Lord, among the heathen [Gentiles], and sing praises unto thy name.” [Paul quotes the Septuagint omitting only—“O Lord.”]

(b.) From Deut. 32: 43. “Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people.”

(c.) Ps. 117: 1. The Auth. version thus ; “O praise the Lord, all ye nations ; praise him all ye people.” Paul and the Septuagint make the second verb stronger than the first, the improved text reading it ;—“Let all the people laud, extol with highest praises.”

(d.) Isa. 11 : 10. Our Auth. vers. reads—“There shall be a root [*i. e.* a root-shoot] of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.”

Here also Paul quotes the Septuagint accurately—“There shall come a root of Jesse, even one who shall arise to reign over the Gentiles, and in him shall the Gentiles trust.”

Of these four quotations, let it be particularly noted;

1. That they are made from diverse authors at far distant periods ; one from Moses ; another from David ; another from some Psalm-writer after the captivity ; and the last from Isaiah. These were representative men—a group of writers well chosen to express the fact that through all the ancient ages, the prophets of Israel saw that in the glorious gospel age, Gentiles were to share with the covenant people.

2. It is specially noticeable that every one of these quotations comes under Paul’s general head—“that the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy,”—each one sending

forth its joyful call to the Gentiles, to join with all the covenant people in praising and extolling the Lord Jehovah for his merciful salvation. They are all manifestly Messianic in character, spoken with the prophetic eye on the Messianic gospel reign, and all grasping the sublime fact that this reign was destined in the purpose of God to embrace all the nations of the earth.

3. Need it be added (the fact seems to be often strangely overlooked), that Paul's faith and hope and zeal were gloriously sustained by the ancient Messianic prophecies respecting the conversion of the Gentile world. He knew what Moses and David and Ezra (supposably), and Isaiah had written on this subject. It was his joy to rest his faith on their inspiring words and bathe his soul in those fountains of living waters—gospel blessings promised and provided in Jesus Christ, and vast enough to fill all the earth. It is simply puerile to suppose that he looked upon those magnificent results as even then exhausted, their significance being only broad enough to take in the small handful of converts then just gathered from the Gentiles ! Yet if he expected the end of the gospel age and of all gospel work during his own life-time, this must follow.

13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

His own bosom swelling with the rapture of such grand hopes, how could he do less than pour forth his prayer to the blessed God who himself enkindles such hopes and aspirations in his servants—that He would “fill them” also (as well as himself) “with all joy and peace in believing ; that ye too may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.” For, all hope of success in the evangelization of the wide, wide world—the countless nations—must forever rest (as put here) “in the power of the Holy Ghost.” All other grounds of confidence are vain. This has in it all the requisite resources of power.

14. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more

boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

16. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

This prayer for you, brethren, ye will not construe to imply any lack of confidence in your benevolence, or knowledge, or ability to admonish one another.

In v. 15 and onward we shall understand Paul the better if we bear in mind that he had never been at Rome, yet had written them with great freedom [it might perhaps be called boldness], on *some points*—this being the sense of the words put in our auth. vers.—“in some sort.” His apology is that the church at Rome was composed somewhat largely of Gentiles, and God had given him a very special commission to the Gentile world. This will explain his points in these verses.

In v. 16, his words “*ministering the gospel of God*” suggest a service analogous to that of the priests in the temple; and this leads him to think of the Gentiles as themselves an “offering presented to God, made acceptable through the purifying agency of the Holy Ghost.

17. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19. Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation:

21. But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

God had really given him great success in preaching to the Gentiles, in which service it had been his aim and joy

to break new ground continually, going where none had gone before. He had no occasion to speak of what others had wrought. His own personal labors, starting from Jerusalem on the extreme South and East, had swept over Asia Minor, Ancient Macedonia and Achaia, to Illyricum on the very borders of Italy, and almost to Rome itself.—His quotation (v. 21) is from Isa. 52 : 15.

22. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24. Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

These labors had compelled him to postpone his long cherished purpose of visiting Rome. Now he has it in his plan to visit Spain and to take Rome on his way. He anticipates a spiritual feast to his soul among them.

25. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

26. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

27. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

This “collection” made among the churches of Macedonia and Achaia for their needy brethren at Jerusalem, held a large place in Paul’s thought and care, it being referred to repeatedly in both his epistles to Corinth (1 Cor. 16 : 1-4 and 2. Cor. 8 and 9). Paul seems to have assumed that the mother church in her straits had special claims upon her vigorous daughters, and supposably he may have hoped by these benefactions to abate Jewish prejudice against Gentile churches and promote a larger and warmer Christian fellowship. It might have been—ought to have been—a peace-offering to their chafed and

but too narrow souls. Paul probably hoped that this offering, going before and with himself, might insure him a more kind reception. We have the result in Acts 21 : 17 and onward.

28. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

29. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

This plan for a journey into Spain by way of Rome probably seemed to be wise ; but the plan of God put in a long and tedious captivity between Paul's thought and its realization. The testimony of several early Fathers renders it highly probable that during the interval of some five or six years between Paul's first and second imprisonment at Rome, he did make this visit to Spain ; but the historic circumstances and the results are quite unknown.

30. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me ;

31. That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea ; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints ;

32. That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33. Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

It was entirely appropriate for Paul to pray to be delivered from unbelieving Jews in Judea and to ask the same prayers from his Christian friends at Rome. But it was equally appropriate to bow submissively to his will who sometimes fails to do all we ask, or long delays it.—God did deliver Paul from their bloody hands so that his life was spared ; and God went with him, a prisoner to Rome, and helped him to write some grand Epistles from his prison home in that city. In how many and what points God made all those things work together for good to Paul and to Christ's kingdom, it was probably Paul's joy to enumerate and to measure after the trials and the disappointment had been bravely borne ; for the Lord is wont to show his people both that his love never fails, and that his wisdom will justify itself in the end.

CHAPTER XVI.

THIS chapter is made up of personal salutations, with a few closing admonitions and benedictions.

1. I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2. That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Cenchrea, the Eastern port of Corinth and the outlet of its Asiatic trade, some nine miles distant from the great city, had at this time a church probably small, yet having at least this one deaconess, Phebe. Her, Paul exhorts the Christians at Rome to receive in the Lord in a manner worthy of saints—*i. e.* with special love, confidence and coöperation. Aid her in whatever matters she may need your aid, for she has aided many and myself. The presumption is strong that the purpose of her visit was rather religious than secular: for the help which Paul's verb “assist” involves should be the same as the “succor” she had given to many saints and to Paul—the words being essentially the same. What special service of Christian labor took her to Rome cannot be known now. Her official duties within the home sphere are more obvious—ministrations to the sick and the suffering of her sex, from whom pastors of the other sex were mostly debarred by the usages of Oriental society.

3. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4. Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5. Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

This family Prisea (or Priscilla) and Aquila, we may trace from Rome to Corinth, (Acts 18: 1, 2); thence to Ephesus (Acts 18: 26); and now again at Rome. They

followed the business of tent-manufacture—which was doubtless good in any of those cities. The history shows us Paul, at home in their house and shop, and preaching (we may suppose) to the church which met in their house.—Here Paul says of them that they had put their own lives in jeopardy for his (very probably at Ephesus)—so that not himself only but all the churches were under great obligations of gratitude for their self-sacrificing service.

6. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us.

7. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

8. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.

9. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*.

11. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus which are in the Lord.

12. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord.

13. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

15. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

16. Salute one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Of this numerous list of brethren and sisters it must suffice to say, Their great number testifies that Rome must have had a large floating population, for at this time Paul had not been in Rome, and therefore must have made their personal acquaintance at other points in Greece, Macedonia, or Asia. Incidentally it shows that Paul had fine social qualities, being careful to *know* and not forget nor ever cease to love the brethren and sisters who labored

with him in christian work, many of whom may have been converted under his labor.

17. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19. For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

Mark and avoid the selfish, self-seeking men who are ever prone to work up divisions and cause offences—all alien to the christian doctrine they had been taught—men who were not serving Christ but their own appetites.—This word “belly” gives at least their general character as sensual and basely selfish—perhaps including other low propensities besides that for the luxuries of the table.—Tonguey men they were—of fair words but base spirit. The church at Rome being a city on a hill, Paul was especially anxious that their record should be pure, not defiled by low, sensual, mischief-making aspirants for distinction.

20. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

“The God of peace”—so called here as having no sympathy with the base men who artfully work up factions in the church.—“Will bruise Satan”—ever at the bottom of all church troubles—“under your feet shortly.” The words come from Gen. 3: 15; “Her seed shall bruise thy head”—that of the old serpent whom Paul identifies with Satan.

21. Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

22. I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

23. Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, salut-

eth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

This group were Paul's then present companions. We read of Gaius (presumably) in 1 Cor. 1: 14 as one of the very few whom Paul had baptized himself. His Christian hospitality was his distinction and his high honor.

25. Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26. But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for obedience of faith:

27. To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

¶ Written to the Romans from Corinthus, *and sent* by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea.

This closing doxology to God only wise groups with exquisite beauty and force many of the grand elements of the gospel. This great God has all power to establish you according to the gospel I preach. This gospel unfolds that mystery long unuttered, but now brought forth to light by the prophetic scriptures under direction of the eternal God and made known among all the Gentiles to bring them to the faith of Christ.—To this God of infinite wisdom and matchless love, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The central thought here is the revelation of the long unknown gospel of salvation for the race, by no means excluding, but rather specially including all the Gentile world. Upon this theme, Paul's tongue and pen never tire. It lifts his soul to sublimest thanksgivings and grandest doxologies. A gospel for the nations ! What could be more sublime !

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

As preliminary to the study of this epistle it will be helpful to the reader to have in mind definite ideas on these points; *viz.*

- I. *Corinth itself*; its geography and history:
- II. The *history of this church*; its planting; the materials which composed it and their prominent characteristics:
- III. The *date* of the epistle and the *place* where written:
- IV. The *topics* of which it treats and the *occasion* for treating them.

I. *Corinth—its geography and history.*

Corinth is situated on a celebrated isthmus which connects Peloponnesus (otherwise called the Morea)—the old province of Achaia—with the continent; having the Saronic gulf opening into the Ægean Sea on the East, and the Corinthian gulf opening into the Ionian Sea on the West. This peculiar geographic position led Pindar to call it “the bridge of the sea,” and Zenophon—“The gate of the Peloponnesus.” Both in the military and in the commercial point of view, it was and naturally must have been one of the great cities of Ancient Greece. It rivalled Athens in learning and culture, and surpassed it in wealth, luxury, and the resulting vices. But the Corinth with which our epistle has to do is not the ancient Grecian city, but the Roman city rebuilt by Julius Cesar. The Roman Corinth still retained its commercial advantages, and consequently its great and rich population. Lying in the same great thoroughfare of trade and travel with Ephesus and having constant communication by sea

with that great city of Asia, its importance can scarcely be overestimated. These circumstances conspired to make it one of Paul's strategic points—to be seized at all hazards and held at any cost for Christ and his kingdom. Chresea, its eastern harbor, nine miles distant, comes to view as the site of a church (perhaps small) of which Phebe (Rom. 16: 1) was a deaconess.

II. *History of the church, its materials; and prominent characteristics.*

Luke (Acts 18: 1-18) gives a brief sketch of Paul's first gospel labors in this city. It was on his second great missionary tour—(the first which brought him into Europe), and after he had planted churches at Philippi and at Thessalonica, and touched at Berea and Athens, that he came to Corinth and there sat down to long and earnest missionary work in that populous but wicked city. With one or more short intermissions he spent here one year and six months. As usual he began by “ reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath, persuading the Jews and the Greeks; but when they (the Jews) opposed and blasphemed, Paul shook his raiment and said to them; your blood be upon your own heads; I am clear: from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles” (Acts 18: 4-8).

Thus in the spring of A. D. 52, five years before the date of this epistle, the foundations of this church at Corinth were laid, its constituent elements being in small part Jews, but in greater part Gentiles. Here he first met the celebrated Priscilla and Aquila, then recently driven out from Rome (Acts 18: 2), and made their house his home and their workshop his place of manual labor and main source of self-support. Here Silas and Timothy soon joined him; Apollo also at a later period; so that Paul's missionary work at Corinth was strongly sustained by these efficient fellow laborers.

The luxury and lasciviousness that reigned in Corinth left their traces upon the young converts of this church, sadly apparent in this epistle in the case of incest (chap. 5), and in the frequent admonition to “ flee fornication,” Apparently the same elements of general character gave occasion to those special questions sent to Paul, which he answered in chap. 7.

Greek culture developing itself into the passion and pride of human philosophy (“ wisdom”) and tending to-

ward a very unworthy depreciation of Paul and the simple gospel of the cross which he preached, left very distinct traces upon the early history of this church and give their color to many passages of our epistle. The manifest ambition for such distinction as might be reached through supernatural gifts (tongues ; the prophetic foresight) had its root in the same Grecian society.

To the envious, hard, bigoted spirit of the Jew we may doubtless ascribe in no small degree the detraction and the incessant counter-working of Paul which come to light repeatedly in these epistles.

These and similar elements in the society of Corinth made Paul's labors then peculiarly severe and trying ; but at the same time they develop in his character those marvellous qualities—humility, self-sacrifice, devotion to Christ and his work, coupled with shrewdness and a noble manliness which no amount of detraction, slander and meanness could over-ride or overcome.—All in all, these epistles give us an admirable study not only of the gospel when brought into contact with culture, wealth, and the deepest social and moral corruption, but of the great man whom the Lord raised up to be the herald of this gospel, and one of the noblest examples of sanctified intellect and heart which has ever blessed our world.

III. The *date* of this epistle is usually assigned to A. D. 57. That celebrated “collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem” (16: 1) ; Paul's great efforts in making it and then in transmitting the avails safely to their destination, help us to fix proximately the date of this writing—near the close of his three years' labor at Ephesus. Of course the same circumstances suffice to mark the *place*. The commercial relations between Ephesus and Corinth account for the facility of communication between these cities. Paul at Ephesus might hear often and very definitely from his church at Corinth.

IV. *The topics he treated and the occasion for treating them.*

In its subject-matter, this Epistle is remarkably miscellaneous, treating a considerable number of topics quite distinct from each other, yet each very definitely indicated and in most cases at least its occasion distinctly stated.

Thus, first ; news coming to him through some of the family of Chloe that sectarian contentions were spring-

ing up there (1 : 1, 2) occasioned the discussions which fill the first four Chapters. With marvellous skill and depth of thought, as we shall see, Paul goes fundamentally into this subject, laboring to draw their attention to the pure simplicity of the gospel scheme to show that its one only center of power is in the Divine Spirit wielding the very truth of God, and that human instruments are relatively of quite insignificant importance.

Next stands the sad case of incest in their church which came to him by public rumor—a thing of common report. This forms the subject directly of chap. 5. and indirectly of a part of chap. 6. Special questions sent to Paul in writing on the kindred subject of the marital relations become the theme of chap. 7.—Chap's. 8 and 10, discuss questions of conscience which sprang up in that idol-worshipping city over the point of eating flesh that had been or might have been offered to an idol. Between these two, chap. 9. digresses to speak of his personal relations to that church in the line of material support.—Chaps. 11-14 treat in general of the methods and proprieties of religious worship in their church assemblies, including their flagrant abuse of the love-feast and of the Lord's supper ; a very full discussion of "spiritual gifts," bestowed variously in that age upon the churches—a subject which gave him occasion to introduce as an episode that admirable chapter on Christian love (chap. 13), as being beyond compare "the more excellent way"—a gift which should command the supreme aspirations of every Christian.—The resurrection, denied it would seem by some at Corinth, forms the sublime theme of chap. 15, while chap. 16 appropriately closes the epistle with words about the collection for the poor at Jerusalem, about his own plans of labor and those of his associates—with salutations and benedictions.

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER the customary address (v. 1-3) Paul thanks God for his abundant grace bestowed on them (v. 4-9); then comes to the main theme of the chapter—their divisions of sectarian sort (v. 10-12) which he proceeds to discuss and rebuke, especially in their relations to himself (v. 13-16); also in view of their origin in the passion for worldly wisdom and science (v. 17-21); that the Jewish demand for miracles and the Corinthian passion for wisdom led both widely astray from Christ, the central thing in the gospel (v. 22-25); that God's call found congenial hearts, not among the proud but the lowly, (v. 26-29); but under the gospel scheme, all best, richest, most blessed things come from God through Christ (v. 30,31).

1. Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,
2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours;
3. Grace *be unto you*, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

The topics treated in this epistle made it necessary for Paul to speak of himself as one called to the apostleship by Christ himself—invested therefore with an authority which modesty must not suppress.

With himself he associates Sosthenes “*the brother*” (Greek)—probably in the sense—the brother well known among you.—Was this the same man who appears under

this name in Acts 18 : 17 ?—The circumstance that Luke makes his name prominent in his history of the planting of this church, and the further fact that Paul introduces him with no other description except “the brother,” render this identity probable, yet not perhaps certain.—If he was the same man, we must suppose him to have been converted early from his intense Judaism to Christianity. For in Luke’s narrative he is the ruler of the synagogue and apparently was heading the persecution against Paul. When Gallio quashed all legal proceedings against the apostle as not coming within his jurisdiction, the Greeks, in sympathy with Paul, or at least indignant against his malicious persecutors, seized upon this Sosthenes and beat him; which rough usage Gallio, as a civil officer, refused to notice.

If this was the same man who is here “the brother,” his change, like that in Paul, was wrought by the power of God which often shows itself equal to such transformations.

Notice that Paul writes this letter from Ephesus in the spring of 57, five years after the scenes of Acts 18, Sosthenes being then with him in that eastern city. Yet this by no means forbids his identity with the Sosthenes who was ruler of the synagogue in Corinth five years before. The two cities must have had intimate mutual relations—men in business occasionally changing their residence from one to the other—a fact illustrated in the case of Priscilla and Aquila.

Observe (v. 2) that while this letter is addressed particularly to the church at Corinth, Paul associates with them “all the saints in every place,” designated here as “those who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,” prayer to Christ as Lord [and God] being the very noticeable characteristic of Christians trained under the apostles. The martyr Stephen was an early example of prayer so addressed (Acts 7 : 59)—The fact indicates their practical views of Christ’s real divinity.*

The “grace and peace” which his benediction implores for them, he seeks and expects equally from “God our Father and from Jesus Christ the Lord.”

* The celebrated letter of the younger Pliny, Governor of the province of Bythiniā, to Trajan (A.D. 107) says that the Christians “were accustomed to meet on a stated day before light and chant among themselves in turn a hymn to Christ as to God.”

4. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

5. That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge;

6. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:

7. So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

8. Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9. God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

We must suppose that at this moment there lay before Paul's mind, the many grievous abuses of these spiritual gifts which he must needs rebuke; their unhallowed ambition to surpass each other, especially in those gifts which were in highest repute in cultured Corinth. Yet Paul's practical wisdom suggested to him this fine prelude to those words of admonition, in which he thanks God in their behalf for these pre-eminent gifts and rejoices with them that God had blessed them so abundantly that they fell behind in nothing. Surely men so richly blessed ought to be scrupulously careful not to abuse them! The consciousness of such mercies from God should banish pride and impress profound humility.

The apostle's testimony for Christ had been confirmed among them by the full measure of supernatural manifestations.—Noticeably also they had learned to live under a near and solemnly impressive sense of the coming of their Lord Jesus Christ.—This allusion to Christ's coming and to their waiting for it does not necessarily imply that they assumed it to be near in calendar time as measured in months and years; but does imply that this coming was a living fact in their Christian thought—a truth held solemnly near to their souls. The great fact of this coming suggested that this same Lord Jesus would confirm them to the end of life and present them blameless (subject to no condemnation) in the great and sweetly expected day of Christ. God who is faithful had pledged this to them in the very fact of calling them into fellowship with his Son.

10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our

Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house of Chloe*, that there are contentions among you.

12. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Here Paul introduces one of the crying sins of Corinth, which occasioned this epistle *viz.*, the dangerous, vicious tendency to *schism* in the church. By members of the family of Chloe, he has heard that there are grave contentions and strifes among them. To make the case entirely specific, he adds—This is what I refer to (v. 12): One is saying I am of Paul (a Paulite); another, I of Apollos; another, I of Cephas [Peter]; another, I of Christ:—four parties each ranging itself under the proud name of its chosen leader.

In the outset Paul earnestly beseeches them by all that is sacred in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that they all speak the same thing, rally under the same hallowed name and no other; that there be no schism, no sectarian parties, no rending asunder of the one sacred body of Christ (the living church). But that ye be *perfected* in the same Christian thought [*nous*] and in the same opinions.—Thus Paul exhorts to harmony of Christian sentiment; to union in their Christian activities; to a mutual sympathy in their Christian heart.

Was it the abuse of criticism, or was it rather the scope given to worldly, ungodly ambition, that developed into this rallying under their favorite leaders? Be the special impulse what it may, it was unchristian; it was perilous, not to that church only but to all the churches of that age. Therefore Paul lost no time in making his solemn and earnest protest against it.—There is not the least reason to suppose that these honored men had been heading this sectarian moment. Paul was more than innocent of any ambition to head a party against Apollos, Peter, or Christ. There is not the slightest ground to suspect this of Apollos, or of Peter. If these strong men *had* lent themselves to

foster this movement, the result must have been fearful ! We have reason to bless God that for a season at least, the churches were spared the terrible curse of sectarianism, launched upon them by men of commanding but divisive influence.

It is supposable that the eloquence of Apollos gave him popularity with the more cultivated classes, and thus made him the innocent occasion of one of these parties. Also, that the well known proclivities of Peter toward the ancient Jewish ritual may have served to place his name at the head of a pro-Jewish faction, while for obvious reasons, Paul would have some stanch friends to lift up his name. Yet others whose better heart recoiled from this idolatry of human names would rally under none other name but that of Christ. But it is one thing to account for sectarian divisions, and quite another thing to justify them. This was Paul's opinion.

13. Is Christ divided ? was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ?

14. I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius ;

15. Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

16. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas : besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

“Is Christ divided ?”—that there should be one Christ for the Paul faction ; another Christ for the Apollos party ; and yet another for those who flung out the banner of Peter ?—This question strikes at the very root of sectarian divisions. For what is a Christian sect with no *Christ* in it ? · And by what right shall one Christian sect appropriate the *whole* of Christ, leaving none of him to any other sect ?—Moreover if each sect makes its own exclusive invisible claim to Christ as its own Lord and Saviour, how shall Christ be divided and each sect be accommodated with a Christ of its own ?—This is manifestly the logic of Paul. So this original proposition to establish sectarian divisions in the one christian church struck his mind.

We may follow his logical thought yet further. Noticeably, he expands his views by discussing the case over his own name. Very skilfully, he forbears to assail the party

of Apollos or the party of Peter ; says not a word about the folly of those who saw fit to rally under those rival names ; but proceeds to debate the main question upon the supposed case of the Paulites.—Ye who say, I am for Paul, tell me ; Was Paul crucified for you ? Do ye take him for your atoning sacrifice and put him in the place which Jesus only can fill ? Would you give to Paul the allegiance, the homage, the love, the service, due to Christ only ?”

“ Were ye baptized into the name of Paul ?”—*i.e.* did your baptism pledge you to follow Paul as your supreme Head, your high and ever honored Lord and King ? [The reader should not fail to note this admirable exposition of the true sense of being baptized into another’s name—*i.e.* that it committed the party baptized to follow this personage in obedience, love and trust. It was the solemn eternal vow of fidelity to the cause, the interest, the name of this supreme Leader].

Paul may have thought much of the virtue of this rite of baptism. He does not perhaps mean to say how much or little he prized it ; but one thing he does say very plainly —*viz.* that he made *no great account of administering the rite himself*. Like his Great Master, he did not make himself prominent in the ritual administration. He even thanked God that he had personally baptized just two men only in Corinth, and besides those, one household ; he could not recal any other. Rather a slim record for a bishop of the ritualistic class. Rarely would such an one present such a record and withal, thank God that it was no larger, no more imposing !—The special felicity of this record in his case was that no man in Corinth could say with the least plausibility that Paul baptized his converts into his own name. They could not say that he figured for building up a sect of Paulites. Nothing could be more abhorrent to his soul than such intriguing for self-glorification.

17. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel : not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness ; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

19. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of

the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21. For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

In this matter Paul followed closely the spirit of his commission, which was, not so much to baptize as to preach the very gospel. It was not to count converts upon the baptismal roll, but to bring sinners to the knowledge of Christ and him crucified.

He now proceeds to another point, *viz.* the style of his preaching as related to the cultured philosophy, wisdom and eloquence which the Greeks held in so great esteem. He declares that he sought not these fascinations of style and manner because he feared to eclipse the glory and the power of the simple, naked cross of Christ. His chosen word (“made of none effect”) suggests emptying the cross of its intrinsic virtue; palsying and paralyzing its spiritual power. For to the men who are to be saved thereby, the cross is one thing; to the men who are to be lost despite of it, it is entirely another thing. To the former it is *the power of God*—so felt consciously in their own souls: to the latter it is foolishness, having none of the attractions of Grecian wisdom, and nothing indeed to commend it to their taste.—Let it be noticed also; This gospel met no deep-felt conscious want, as in morally hungry, sin-stricken souls, for the good reason that this sense of want was not there. Their souls were far from being morally hungry. Where consciousness of sin should be was a blank in their moral nature. For all these reasons, there was no beauty in Christ that they should desire him, and no glory in his cross to their dull moral vision.

In the scripture (Isa. 29: 14) from which Paul took his words, the Septuagint gives the passage a turn which brings the agency of God into bolder prominence;—not as our auth. ver. has it;—“For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,” but—“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise I will put out of sight the wisdom of the intelligent.”—

This general sentiment seemed to have special attraction for our Lord, as we see in Matt. 11: 25, 26.

The wisdom of the Greek, arrayed against the simplicity of the gospel, was profoundly proud and self-asserting ; but noticeably, Paul cowers not before its high and arrogant pretensions. Rather he turns the table upon it and sublimely demands; “Where is the Grecian wise man who would fain match his wisdom against God’s? Where is the Jewish scribe, whose learning seems to himself to overshadow the simple doctrines of the cross ? Hath not God turned all their boasted wisdom into folly by displaying the infinitely higher, grander glory and efficiency of his gospel ?—The relative value of these rival systems must in reason be tested by their fruits. Where are the men whose souls the wisdom of Greece or the learning of Jewish scribes has availed to save ?—But God has glorified his gospel and his Son by making the preaching of his gospel the power of God unto salvation to every believing soul.—After long ages of experiment (v.21.) in which God wisely allowed human wisdom most ample range and time to find out God and it had practically found out nothing, but the nations had sunk into basest idol-worship, and utterly ignored the Great and Mighty God, then it pleased God in his wisdom and in his love to save all believing souls by what the sages of Corinth assumed to regard as “the foolishness of preaching.”

Paul says, “foolishness of preaching”—taking the words from the lips of the haughty Greek—as if he would say—That preaching which ye stigmatize as foolishness but in which I glory as being the consummation of divine wisdom.

To shield these words from possible abuse in another direction, it may fitly be suggested that in Paul’s thought “the foolishness of preaching” was by no means the same as *foolish preaching*—the sort which debases *noblest themes* with weak words and vapid thought—as if the less of sense and of force their preaching had, the more range and scope there would be for the concurrent power of God. Let men beware how they run Paul’s logic into stupidity and plead his authority for the weakest nonsense ! If such men could have heard Paul himself preach, they would know that his sermons were never tame in thought or weak in logic, or barren of electric power. Far enough was he from being

an advocate of “foolish preaching” either in precept or example.

22. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom :

23. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness :

24. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For Jews demand miracles ; Greeks seek for wisdom ; but we care not to meet the demands of either. Rather, obeying our high commission, we simply preach Christ crucified, though it be to Jews a stumbling-block and to Gentiles [so the better text] foolishness. For to those whom God’s word and spirit have called, whether they be Jews or Greeks, this Christ is both the power and the wisdom of God. In him they rejoice to see divine wisdom ; in him they become sweetly conscious of glorious power. Christ crucified satisfies most perfectly every demand of their intelligence—every want of their moral nature.—For, what proud men please to call “the foolishness of God” is wiser far than the most vaunted wisdom of men, and what they may sneer at as God’s weakness is mightier far than all the might of mortals.

26. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called* :

27. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ;

28. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are :

29. That no flesh should glory in his presence.

The word “for,” shows that the facts adduced here are cited to illustrate and confirm the doctrine just before laid down. Let them look into their christian community.

They would find there but very few from the higher grades of society—but few distinguished for noble rank, or pre-eminent wisdom, or commanding ability. So it has been largely every where. Cultured Athens furnished from its thousands no church at all, and the men whom the world calls great are for the most part sparsely represented in the churches of Christ.—Paul readily comprehends the philosophy of this fact as it lies in the counsels of God ; *viz*, “that no flesh should glory in his presence ;” that the relative weakness of the human instruments should illustrate the more signally the paramount strength and glory of the divine forces that build up his earthly kingdom.

In v. 28, the clause—“things that are not”—does not mean—things that have no real existence—mere nonentities ; but things *reputed* as nothing—this being the precise sense given it by the Greek negative used here.

30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption :

31. That, according as it is written, He that glorifieth, let him glory in the Lord.

If we ask [it is always well to do so] for the connection of thought which brings in this precious passage (v. 30) here, we must certainly find it in the suggestive power of the word “chosen” (v. 28). “God hath chosen” us, the weak things of the world, to honor his grace and his power the more.—Then follows this ; It is of him that we are in Christ at all. His “call” brought us in.—Now to this, let me add (Paul would say) that through God’s own plan, Jesus Christ is made as to us, “our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption,”—every thing which as lost sinners we need to save our souls from sin and from the curse of the law we have broken.—“Wisdom” is doubtless named here because it had been so prominent throughout this chapter. The wise Greeks, glorying in their wisdom, may be looking down scornfully upon unlearned christians as having none of their vaunted wisdom ; but (Paul would suggest), the God of infinite wisdom makes Jesus Christ the fountain of wisdom to his people. The wisdom that is true, real, supremely precious, they need not lack, cannot lack, so long as Jesus is made to them of God, their wisdom.

So is he also the real ground of their justification ; the supreme fountain and source of all sanctifying power, and of complete ultimate redemption.

The scriptural authority for this (“according as it is written”) brings up that very striking passage (Jer. 9: 23) “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches : But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness.”



CHAPTER II.

THE previous chapter having treated somewhat fully the negative side, showing how Paul did *not* come to them with the gospel, this chapter brings out the positive side, shows how he *did* come ;—*viz.*, with the Spirit of God, in the demonstration of his power (v. 1–5) ; not without real wisdom, yet not a wisdom of this world but with that higher wisdom which God has revealed to those who are capable of receiving it—a wisdom all unseen by the great men of earth (v. 6–9) ; the deep things of God are revealed by his Spirit, representing the Infinite mind of God, even as the human intelligence is the knowing faculty in man (v. 10–12). These great truths he communicates to the spiritually-minded who can receive them (v. 13–16).

1. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

I made no pretensions to eloquent speech or to Grecian philosophy ; I sought not either, when I came to you, making known the testimony God had given of his Son. —Paul’s choice of the word “testimony” to represent the gospel and the truths it enfolds and proclaims is noticeably pertinent ; for “testimony” is about the last thing that

needs the embellishment of oratory and imagination. Nothing but the simple facts of the case are germane to testimony. Paul had the good sense to see this and to act accordingly. He would have men see what God had said about salvation through his Son. The more direct, simple and clear his statement of the facts could be made, the more effective would the naked truth become, and the more surely would the Spirit of God accompany his words with his own demonstrations of power.

Paul's words “I determined to know nothing among you save Christ, and Him only as crucified,” have seemed to many critics so very strong as to demand some softening and modification. They suggest that we translate them—not “*know*,” but *make known*. So translating we do not shut up Paul to this single theme as the only thing he would *know*; but only as the theme he would *make known*, preaching and testifying.—But Paul's word is precisely *know*; and we cannot honestly make any thing less of it, or anything else. In many other passages, Paul says—“*make known*;” but he does not use that verb here.—The fair sense of his word is; I determined not to go among you to study Grecian philosophy or Grecian eloquence, though I knew very well how highly both were appreciated in Corinth. I determined to shut down upon whatever curiosity I might feel to learn your antiquities, your celebrities, your men or your deeds of great renown; your works of art, your splendid Corinthian architecture;—none of these things should attract my thought; not a thing of this sort should be allowed to divert me from my one purpose of preaching Christ and his death for the sins of men.

3. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4. And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Moreover, I came not in the consciousness of strength, nor in the buoyancy of health, but “in weakness, in fear and in much trembling.” I felt the vast responsibilities of

my work. I had no strength in myself for a work so great against obstacles so formidable. I would not use, I could not bring myself to seek—the enticing words of man's wisdom. I sought only the demonstration of the Divine Spirit's power—to the end that your faith should not rest in human wisdom, but only upon the testimony of God, brought home to the human soul by his witnessing Spirit.

6. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory;

8. Which none of the prinees of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

The “perfect” here are not the sinless, but the mature in mind and Christian character—as opposed to babes—immature converts. For these mature ones we have deep, profound truths to teach—things that are real, true wisdom—not indeed of this world or of its great men ;—but of God.

“Mystery” here in the Pauline sense—not of things lying beyond the limits of human thought, and known therefore to God only ; but things unrevealed during the early ages of time, yet brought to light in the gospel age ; the great things of the gospel, pertaining to the work of Christ and the gifts of the Spirit. These things were in the deep plans of God before the world was made. The princes of this world—Jewish and Roman—knew them not :—else they had not crucified the Lord of Glory.

The quotation in v. 9 is from Isa. 64: 4—often taken to refer to the yet unseen things of heaven ; but strictly having no reference to the future world whatever, and only to the revelations of the gospel to be made in the then future ages of time. “The things God had prepared for those that love him” lay in the incarnation, sufferings and work of

Christ. These were the things which the rulers of Judea who murdered Jesus did not know, but which God has revealed to his people through the Spirit.

10. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The Spirit is here thought of as representing the intelligence, the mind of God, and therefore as surely knowing and capable of teaching all the deep things of God. For illustration, consider that it is the spirit of man, his intellectual, spiritual nature which constitutes his faculty of knowing—which receives and holds his knowledge. This divine Spirit within us works in and upon our intelligence; becomes our teacher to “lead us into all truth.” By his presence and agency, therefore, we come to know the things that are graciously given us of God—*i. e.* the gospel of our salvation.

13. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

The last clause in v. 13, is difficult—in our Auth. version—“comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But this translation admits of improvement. “With spiritual”—is rather—“to those who are spiritual”—put in contrast with the “natural man” in v. 14. Paul has no word for “with,” and the dative case which he does use naturally means *to* the spiritually minded.—In v. 13 his point is that in revealing those deep things, he employs, not the words of human wisdom, but words taught of the Holy Ghost, and in addressing men, discriminating between those who

have the Spirit and those who have him not, and imparting these spiritual things only to the spiritually minded—men taught by the Spirit of God. The sense I take to be—With discrimination imparting spiritual truth to spiritual minds. The participle [sunkrinontes] suggests this discrimination between the two classes as an act of judgment, its normal sense being to *judge between* for the purpose of making the necessary discrimination. Critics have construed this clause variously, and especially this participle. The other cases of its usage by Paul (2 Cor 10 : 12) give but little help. Meyer puts it—“connecting spiritual things with spiritual—*i. e.* not mingling heterogeneous things, but linking the spiritual lessons of the Spirit with spiritual language ;” thus assuming that this clause merely expands the sentiment of the clause immediately preceding.—The precise sense which I have given it follows the general drift of the whole context and the special demands of the antithesis in the next words—“But the natural man” etc.

Furthermore, the translation of the Auth. version assumes that this clause states a *law or method of interpretation*. But to this there are very grave objections. *Interpretation* is entirely aside from the drift and scope of the passage. Paul is speaking, not of interpreting but of imparting. He would show—not how he learns what God’s word means, but what class of men can receive it. He has carefully said (v. 6) that it was only to men of mature Christian development that he could speak this deep wisdom of God ; and in v. 14, which stands directly over against our clause, he tells us that the natural man does not receive the things taught of the Spirit because they seem foolishness to him, and he cannot know them because they can be discerned only through the teachings of the Spirit—of which he has no experience.

15. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The spiritual (*i. e.* the man taught by the Spirit), judges in the sense of appreciating, understanding, all spiritual things, yet is never really estimated and understood by men unenlightened of the Spirit.—those who judge of things only as men do in their natural state of sin.—How

can such men know the mind of the Lord that they should teach him ? How can they estimate worthily the great truths pertaining to God and his gospel ? Consequently they are utterly incompetent to estimate the principles and the life of God's children. We who have the mind of Christ apprehend these things most readily.

All this explains why the great and wise men of Corinth were so dark-minded as to the things of the gospel. All their vaunted wisdom seemed to have no capacity for apprehending the gospel of Christ.



C H A P T E R III.

THAT they were not spiritual but carnal of mind—to be fed therefore as babes, Paul proves from their strifes and sectarian spirit (v. 1–4): these apostolic laborers were not principals but only subordinates—mere servants of the Lord and wholly dependent on the Lord for all their real success (v. 5–8);—these, the laborers ; the work done is wholly God's (v. 9). Paul laid the foundation by preaching Christ ; the others followed him, making additions to the building, of greater or less value (v. 10–15). All real Christians are truly God's temple, in which temple the Spirit of God dwells, and no man should defile it (v. 16,17) ; hence professed Christians should beware of being proud of their worldly wisdom (v. 18–20) and of glorying in men, for the best of men are only Christ's servants, to work for him, whom they should serve as belonging to him only, as he also, to God (v. 21–23).

1. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

2. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat : for hitherto ye were not able to *bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

3. For ye are yet carnal : for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men ?

4. For while one saith, I am of Paul ; and another, I am of Apollos ; are ye not carnal ?

Gladly would I have spoken to you as to spiritual men and given you rich spiritual truth accordingly ; but I could not : your carnality of mind made that impossible. The best I could do because the best ye could bear was to feed you with milk adapted to babes. Your carnal spirit, your infantile state of development, reveals itself in your clannish sectarianism.—Plainly Paul meant to take down their proud self-conceit, and to suggest that their exalted notions of their own wisdom were the proof of a very low stage of spiritual attainment. Their clannish spirit showed that they over-estimated men and under-estimated Christ—this mis-estimation being conclusive evidence of a mind steeped in things of earth and not imbued with the things of heaven. Men who can so easily and naturally over-ride the law of love and revel in the antagonisms of strife and envy are most thoroughly carnal, walking as men do, and not as Christians.

Remarkably the oldest manuscripts give the last word of v. 4—not “carnal” but “men.” When one says—“I of Paul,” and another—“I of Apollos ; “Are ye not men ?” This is *manlike* ; this is being *human*, in the very low sense. The choice of this word follows the last clause of v. 3, “And walk *as men*.”

5. Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ?

6. I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase.

7. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase.

8. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one : and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

Paul’s argument against following sectarian leaders and building up sects on the names of great men, is thoroughly fundamental ; *viz.* this :—that these great men are not so very great after all. They are not principals but only sub-

ordinates. They perform a small ministerial service ; but are at best only very humble servants. They do a small work in planting and watering ; but the real growth, the fruitage, is all of God. Their work would be wholly a blank, a dead failure, if God's agency were to be left out. Practically, therefore, the planter is nothing—the waterer nothing : God who gives the increase is everything. Why then should ye glorify men ?

“ He that planteth and he that watereth are one ”—in the sense of being in one and the same class—one party as toward God who is the other party. The utmost they can do is a small, honest service which God rewards for its sincerity more than for the essential importance of what they do.—It is, therefore, very futile and foolish to discriminate in favor of one and against another of these entirely subordinate instruments, leaving the momentous agency of God in all Christian work so strangely out of account.—Here again in v. 5 the oldest manuscripts change the punctuation, yet leave the sense substantially the same —thus : “ Who is Paul and who is Apollos ? Ministers by whom ye believed,” [that is all].

9. For we are laborers together with God : ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

That christian ministers do labor jointly with God—is doubtless a truth, yet is not *the* truth which Paul put into this passage. The natural bearing of this truth is to elevate man by calling attention to his association with God in spiritual work. This would be foreign from Paul's purpose in this connection—which was rather to indicate the very subordinate position of men. This construction is therefore rather adverse to Paul's drift of thought here.—In what Paul actually said, the idea of association—“ together with ”—belongs exclusively to the men—to the “ we ” who labor ; while in Paul's Greek words, the genitive—God's fellow-laborers—indicates their common relation of service to him. They are precisely *his* workmen. As to their personal relations to each other they are all on the same footing—joint fellow-workers. It is not easy to give the Greek a perfect translation ; but this preserves the essential features : “ We are God's brother-laborers.”—We are brethren, bound to *work together* for the common

object ; and we are all God's workmen, working for him only and not for ourselves.

Ye are God's farm, or garden ;—not “ husbandry ” in the modern sense, for this word suggests the *art* or science of farming. Paul means only that “ ye ”—the men upon whom our labor is expended—are the garden of the Lord, in and upon which we work ; or to change the figure—the *building* of God, his temple, which we are helping to build.

10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ;

13. Every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon he shall receive a reward.

15. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

Exegetically, the great question of this passage is whether the things built upon this foundation [Christ] (v. 12–15), are to be thought of as the *doctrines preached* ; or as the *converts* made and brought into the church. Doubtless the preaching of truth works toward making the converts ; but we have to ask—Which leads the thought here ; the quality of the things preached ; or the quality of the converts made ?

In the first place, the foundation is certainly not Christ as a man, a convert, a church-member ; but Christ as embodying all gospel truth. Doubtless there is a very important sense in which Christ *personally* is the foundation rock upon which the church, God's temple is built, but this is not the sense in which Paul laid this foundation. He laid the foundation only in the sense of preaching Christ and him crucified ; *i. e.* we start with the idea of *doctrines*, not *converts*.

Next, other men coming after him are supposed to build on this one foundation—Christ and his cross. If they build by placing on this foundation yet more of solid, pure gospel truth, it will be gold and silver in God's temple ; but if they pile on wood, hay, stubble,—(as they may), —the fire will try it.

Thus far the course of thought is manifestly of truth primarily rather than of converts. But the proving of his work by the fire, and especially the allusion to "the day" as that which would expose and "declare"—*i. e.* reveal the quality of his work, is very naturally suggestive of converts. We harmonize the whole description if we assume that in Paul's thought, poor preaching, bad doctrine, brings in poor converts whom "the great day" will show to be only "wood, hay and stubble," for the fires of the judgment. Thus his mind might insensibly glide from the first conception—truth preached—to the final thought—the fruits of such preaching proved to be only the ruin of souls. According to Scripture usage and to common sense also, it is not precisely doctrines but human souls that are tried with fire in the last awful day. If this laborer has been honest yet misguided and ignorant, his converts perish, though himself may be saved as one plucked out from a tremendous conflagration.

Thus the whole passage suggests forcibly that men who preach something else than Christ will make converts who are anything else rather than christians. Those who make little of Christ in their preaching and teaching will fill the church with men who have little of Christ in their souls. Wood and stubble in place of gospel truth will surely represent itself by wood and stubble in place of the precious stones, fit for the walls of God's spiritual temple. Let men take care how they build christian churches ! And how they say to men—This is the way to heaven—and lo ! it is the way to hell !

16. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?

17. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

Here the conception of Christians as God's temple follows the previous passage—"ye are God's building "(v. 9)

Yet further back lay the Jewish temple, glorified by the sacred Shechinah—the visibly manifested presence of God, evermore resting on the mercy-seat beneath the Cherubim. Prophecy translated this symbol into the language of common thought in the promise—“I will dwell in them and walk in them ;”—which the yet plainer phrase of the Christian age expressed in the promised gift of the Spirit as a “Comforter,” to abide with you forever ; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you” (John 14 : 16, 17).

This great gospel truth Paul assumes that every Christian ought surely to know.—“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells within you ?”—Obviously a human temple in which God deigns to dwell should be kept pure and never suffer the least defilement. Hence the moral force of Paul’s inference ;—“If any man defile the temple of God, God shall *defile him*”—this being what Paul said—the precise form in which he puts this thought. This play upon the twofold sense of the word “defile” arrests and fixes attention, and suggests how reasonable it is that men having so little respect for God as to foul his temple should meet their deserved doom in shame and everlasting contempt. Really no persuasive to moral purity, and no dissuasive against sin can be more impressive, more solemn, than this—that our bodies are temples of God in which he dwells by his Spirit. A temple for God should tolerate no pollution, not even a stain. The human soul in which he dwells should admit nothing foul—that is to say, nothing alien from purity and love, nothing selfish, nothing proud, nothing sensual and earthly; nothing that would not be at home in the very atmosphere of heaven. Surely if we carried about with us the sense of this truth—God’s Spirit deigns to dwell in my soul as his temple—this of itself would be instead of all other admonitions against sin and incentives toward a pure heart and an unblemished life.

18. Let no men deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God : for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

21. Therefore let no man glory in men : for all things are yours;

22. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ;

23. And ye are Christ's ; and Christ *is* God's.

The moral force of this momentous consideration, Paul would bring to bear upon the case then present—the vanity and pride which appeared in the church at Corinth—men vain of their Grecian philosophy, conceited with the notion of being wiser than Paul ; wiser than the gospel in its simplicity.—Let them have the sense to eschew such conceit, even to the extent of becoming fools in their own esteem so that they may become truly wise under God's teaching.

The first quotation is from Job 5 : 13 ; the second, from Ps. 94 : 11.

The practical application (very sensibly drawn), is—Let no man glory *in men*—not even in the great and good men who have brought to you the gospel. The best of them are only God's weak instruments whom he graciously uses for your service. By the gracious gift of God, they are all yours.—Let your heart receive them as God's servants and as his gift ; and not only those men, but all the powers and agencies of earth and heaven ; the world, life, death ; things present ; things to come"—all are made to subserve the spiritual purity and welfare of the living church, and should be estimated in this light.

As all these things are for the church, so is the church for Christ, and Christ, for God. Here all things culminate, reaching their supreme consummation in the infinite glory of God. As they emanate from his boundless love alone, so let them return to exalt his well deserved and everlasting glory !



CHAPTER IV.

IN this chapter we have the painful spectacle of a man of noble soul, harassed by the jealousy, detraction and an-

tagonism of narrow and mean souls—for all which he would care little were it not that his reputation is a priceless treasure to the church, and that all there is of himself he has given to Christ, and must therefore make the most of himself for the gospel's sake.

In general theme, this chapter belongs with the three that precede it—all suggested by the sectarian strifes at Corinth over the great names of their apostles. A party there, probably of Jewish antecedents, set themselves to disparage Paul in comparison with Apollos and Peter. It is of small consequence to us to know what points they raised against him. Men who *will* to do it can always trump up something—all the same, though there be not the least occasion in the facts of the case.

In this chapter, Paul says to them—Think of us as stewards of God whose first concern is fidelity to their master (v. 1,2); that he had not the least reason to care for the judgment which they or any man might pass upon him—the Lord's judgment and this only, being of any importance (v. 3–5); which he would apply in the present case (v. 6,7). Half ironically, he represents his opponents as supremely well off, and puts in contrast his own hardships, privations and self-sacrifices (v. 8–13); then, in a strain of tenderness and warning, declares his love as their father in the gospel (v. 14–16). Why he sends to them Timothy (v. 17). Some were proudly defiant, whose case calls for sternness (v. 18–21).

1. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Let our opponents there in Corinth thinks of us as Christ's servants, bearing the responsibilities of stewards in the gospel household, having in charge “the mysteries of God”—those gospel truths through long ages unknown, but now revealed by our preaching.

The first word of v. 2, according to the oldest textual authorities, should be.—*Herein*—in this sphere of the steward—the very first quality sought is fidelity—fidelity of course to his employer. What others might think or say of them was a very insignificant matter, if they were only true to their Master.

3. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

4. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

The words of Paul which represents the phrase—"man's judgment"—are precisely—*under man's day*—"day" being used in Roman law-phrase in reference to an indictment to appear in court for trial. To "fix a day" for a man was to serve a writ upon him—an indictment to appear.

The more important point in this passage is what Paul says of judging himself.

There is no question that he sought to live in all good conscience toward God, fulfilling every demand of an enlightened conscience, and seeking light perpetually from his Divine Teacher; but we must observe that he does not regard the decisions of his own conscience as surely infallible. In his view nothing can infallibly certify to him his final approval before the Lord save the Lord's own decision. Paul may be supposed to remember that in his Pharisaic life he thought he was very conscientious, yet found to his future shame and grief that he was under a very grave mistake, involving great sin.—The definite point he makes here is that his own judgment as to himself cannot be relied on to decide his final acceptance before God, for nothing can decide this but the judgment of Christ himself.

This doctrine has vital bearings on the point of the absolute infallibility of conscience; and consequently on the practical question whether walking in all good conscience is really equivalent to being sinless. It seems plain that Paul would answer both these questions in the negative.

No extended discussion of this point would be in place here. It must suffice to suggest that the imperfections pertaining to the conscience lie in the domain of the intelligence, and especially in the mind's judgment of right as affected by cherished sin. Imperfect notions of what is

right may involve sin—which sin does not become righteousness because the conscience approves and the will acts accordingly.

6. And these things brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes ; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

7. For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? Now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

In the middle clause of v. 6, the older manuscripts omit the word to “think,” and have no such limitation as our version puts in the words “*of men*”—leaving his sense thus :—“that in us ye may learn *this*—not to be [or to go] above what is written : and that ye be not puffed up each one in behalf of some one against another.

To glory boastfully, proud over gifts which are from God, must be most offensive to him, not to say insulting and abusive ; for it practically denies God the Giver, and assumes those things to be one’s own and not God’s—of and from themselves and not from God.

8. Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us : and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

9. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death : for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

This is irony—morally admissible when a writer supposes his reader too thick headed and conceited to see and to feel his meaning if put in sober earnest. It is not specially complimentary to the good sense of those proud men of Corinth.—To “reign as kings” is a proverbial expression—as we might say—“Happy as a king.” They thought themselves to be at the top of society, on the highest wave of popular esteem. Paul wishes most heartily that they were as good and worthy as they supposed themselves to be, for then himself and his fellow-laborers might rejoice in their high position.

As for us, apostles, we are not swimming on the top wave of popular favor, puffed, moreover, with self-conceit. We are rather like the men set apart in the gladiator's shows to come last—death-doomed—to crown the savage scene by our death-agonies—a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.

Incidentally, Paul shows that in his view the scenes of earth lie in full view of the angels of heaven.

10. *We are* fools for Christ's sake, but *ye are* wise in Christ; *we are* weak, but *ye are* strong; *ye are* honorable, but *we are* despised.

11. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place;

12. And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13. Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day.

“We are fools for Christ's sake”—so reputed among the disaffected brethren at Corinth:—while *ye are* very wise in Christ in your own esteem—the same vein of irony running through this passage.

The words in v. 13—“filth and offscouring”—are intensely strong. We are the refuse of society; the sweepings of the streets; the contents of the sewers—those whom men discard and rule out of decent society.—Was not this picture overdrawn? If not, the case gives us a new appreciation of the trials and humiliations to which Paul was subjected in this proud, dissolute city.

14. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*.

15. For though *ye have* ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16. Wherefore I beseech you, be *ye* followers of me.

As if aware that his real intent in these strong words might be misunderstood he subjoins:—“I say not these things to put you to shame [they *ought* to have been

ashamed !] —but for the love I bear you as my children, I warn you. Ye may have myriads of teachers in Christ: but ye have few real fathers. I have been to you a very father in Christ, and ye are my children in the gospel.

How strangely had they responded to such love!—and again : how forbearing and loving is the paternal heart of the great Apostle, despite of such abuse !

17. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

Affairs at Corinth had become so bad that Paul sent his best man, Timothy, especially to bring to their remembrance the doctrines Paul preached and his ways of Christian living, as taught in all the churches.

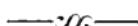
18. Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.

19. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

20. For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

21. What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?

Some of those malcontents were really defiant, to such an extent that they scoffed at what Paul might say by letter, and feared only the infliction of miraculous judgments which, if present he might visit upon them. They carried a high hand, under the feeling that Paul would not come in person ; but Paul warned them that he would. They might learn to their cost that the gospel kingdom had in it some power for such contemners to fear.



CHAPTER V.

THE one subject treated in this chapter is the case of incest in the church of Corinth. Paul presents the facts

(v. 1, 2); directs the excommunication of the offender (v. 3–5); gives his reasons, *viz.* the pernicious influence of such an offender within their communion (v. 6–8 : enumerates offences which demand excommunication (v. 9–11); the church responsible for her own members—not for those outside her pale (v. 12, 13).

1. It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

2. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

This great scandal reached Paul at Ephesus by common rumor. We may remember that the two cities were in easy and frequent communication. It was a horrible case of incest, such as would disgrace even Gentile society*—a man marrying his father's wife.

From 2 Cor. 7 : 12 it would seem that the father was an injured man, “suffering wrong,” and therefore, still living. Other particulars of the case are unknown.—The offence was flagrant, one which the law of nature and the law of God (Lev. 18 : 8) unite to condemn.

Strange to think of, they were “puffed up—probably Paul means, not because of, but in *spite* of, notwithstanding, this shameful crime in their church. It may be supposed that he was prominent, perhaps popular in the city—a man for a carnal church to be proud of in their communion—inasmuch as they took not the Christian but the worldly view of the case and of their duty. The Christian view would have filled them with mourning and shame.

3. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed.

4. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5. To deliver such a one unto Satan, for the destruc-

* Cicero calls this very sin—“*Scelus incredibile, inauditum*”—an incredible, unheard of crime.

tion of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul could adjudge such a case as well absent as present, the crime being public, palpable, undeniable. He enjoins therefore, that they gather together in church capacity and in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the exercise of their power from Him, sever this offender from their communion—expressed here as “delivering him unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved” at last. Similarly Paul said (1 Tim. 1 : 19, 20) of Hymeneus and Alexander—“Whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” Satan is assumed to be the ruler of the realms outside the church, so that to be cast out of the church was being turned over into the domain of Satan. We need not suppose that Satan inflicted the destruction, inasmuch as it is not his way to punish his own servants for service done to himself. This punishment came through the miraculous power vested in the apostles. See other cases Acts 13 : 6–11 and compare Jam. 5 : 14–16 and 1 Cor. 11 : 30–32.—The end sought was not the ruin but the salvation of his soul,

That the sentence of excision was to be passed by the church convened in their church capacity assumes a congregational form of polity.—Paul was with them in spirit, and they were to think of him as concurring, because they had his official decision upon the case.

6. Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

Is this “glorying” to be taken in a general or a special sense—*i. e.* as referring in general to the prevalent self-conceit, pride of worldly wisdom, and pride in the popular spiritual gifts of the age which characterized the churches; or as referring specially to being “puffed up” (v. 2.) notwithstanding this scandalous crime in their church?—The latter seems to me most probable, because

most pertinent to the special facts of the case : because this particular manifestation of pride was too bad to be passed without special notice ; and because the following context sustains it—the thought being that such glorying strangely ignored the fearful peril of contamination which such an offence, unrebuked, must incur. A pertinent proverb helps Paul to put the case forcibly ;—A very little leaven permeates and changes the whole mass. If leaven be considered defiling, it defiles the whole.—Naturally his mind reverts to that stringent prohibition of leaven which impressed itself into Jewish history in their first great national festival, the Passover (Ex. 13 :) It behoved them as the people of Christ to be carefully, rigidly *unleavened*, for Christ their Paschal Lamb, had been slain for them, and therefore in this gospel scheme the new Passover must be kept, having never a particle of the old leaven of sin in all their borders, but only the unleavened bread, symbolic of purity, sincerity, truth. This illustration must have been impressively pertinent and clear to those of his readers who had sufficient knowledge of the patent facts of Jewish history to see its points in their full strength.

It is plain that Paul saw in the Paschal Lamb a real and pertinent type of Christ as an atoning sacrifice for sin. As the blood of the ancient Paschal Lamb, sprinkled over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings, caused the destroying angel to *pass over* those households unsmitten, while in every household of Egypt, he smote all the first-born in death ; so Christ's blood sprinkled upon the penitent sinner's soul signifies pardon and guaranties salvation.

9. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators :

10. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters : for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such a one no not to eat.

This allusion to “an epistle”—“I wrote unto you in *the epistle*”—(past historic tense and giving the noun the article)—must be understood to refer to a previous letter

of which no trace save this remains. It need be no surprise that some of Paul's letters have failed of transmission to us. They answered their original purpose we must suppose, and were not put into the sacred canon (perhaps) for the same reason which left out so many of the blessed words of the Master himself (Jn. 21 : 25)—In that epistle he had forbidden them to mingle socially with fornicators—but he could not apply this prohibition universally—to *all* fornicators—for the rule if applied in a city corrupt as Corinth to all such characters would compel them to go out of the world. But within the church, the guilty man being “called a brother,” they must refuse positively to associate with him socially,—even at the common table.—The mooted question of interpretation on this passage is whether this eating refers to the Lord's table only, or to the social table in every man's house.

Without any reasonable doubt the latter—the private house—must be the true interpretation :—(a) Because this is the obvious sense of Paul's words, from which we must not swerve except for strong reasons :—(b) Because if referred to the Lord's table only, it would practically signify nothing beyond excommunication and would scarcely bear at all upon what is here the main point, *viz.*, keeping “company”—mingling socially with fornicators (v. 9)—(c) Because to forbid their eating at the Lord's table with fornicators, idolaters, drunkards, is not very emphatic—rather in such a connection as this, would be decidedly weak :—and finally (d) Because under the usages of oriental society, the eating together at a common table had far more significance than it has in occidental life. It meant more; involved a higher friendship; carried with it a far more positive indorsement of the character of your guest.

Indeed, it is only in the light of this very special and peculiar significance of eating at the common table in the age of Paul, that this precept becomes difficult and delicate when we would apply it to the question of the common table under the usages and assumed significance of our times. It becomes difficult now to lay down a positive, invariable rule, because sometimes, eating socially at the same table would have but the least possible significance. Christians must study the spirit of Paul's rule and obey it, while at the same time its letter cannot be held to be under all circumstances binding.

12. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13. But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

These principles apply only to members of your church—not to men outside your church communion. Over the latter you have no jurisdiction; you leave them to God alone. Over your own members you have jurisdiction and are bound to exercise it.



CHAPTER VI.

IN tracing the course of thought in this chapter, we readily make v. 1–11, one section—its leading topic being—professed christians going to law with their brethren—a theme which suggests that only the righteous—never the wicked—inherit God's kingdom (v. 9–11). Then v. 12 breaks abruptly into a subject, only named here but taken up for full discussion in chap's 8 and 10;—from which Paul passes to admonish against fornication (v. 14–20).

1. Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjnst, and not before the saints?

2. Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3. Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Paul makes his first word “dare,” emphatic by position—as if to express his amazement at the moral hardihood which this thing evinces. How deeply do ye disgrace yourselves and the church of God by carrying your litigations before ungodly men, instead of arranging them among yourselves, unobserved by the wicked.

The first point difficult of interpretation is the sense in which “the saints shall judge the world,” and “judge angels.”

Inasmuch as the only angels to be judged are the fallen, and these, at the same time with the beings of our world, the two points are essentially one.—To what then does Paul refer, and in what sense do the “saints judge the world ?”

1. Negatively, certainly not in the same sense in which Christ is final judge. This is not supposable ;—is in no manner possible.

2. Not in the sense of *associate judges*—assessors on the same great throne of judgment in a subordinate capacity ; for of this, there is not the slightest hint in the scriptures ; and the scripture account of the final judgment scene virtually precludes this supposition.

3. I see no good reason to assume its reference to what Christ may be supposed to indicate in Mat. 19: 28 and Luke 22: 30 ;—“When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” “I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”—This is a very different scene from that of the final judgment, being a permanent arrangement, not a special assize of court ; and referring very specifically, not to judging a wicked world and fallen angels, but the twelve tribes of Israel.

Positively ; the only sense which the nature of the case admits, or which the very definite description of the final judgment (Mat. 25) can provide for, is this ; That they judge the world and angels *by their life-record*—by their example of righteousness, set over against wickedness ; of humble self-sacrificing benevolence set over against self-conceited Pharisaic assumption, combined with the utter negation of all really good deeds. In Matthew 25: 34-45 ; our Lord drew the picture in glowing light. The life-testimony of moral beings of the same race with the sinning men judged there, coming out of the same world, even from the same household perhaps—from amid the same surroundings—yet having lived unto God, became a tremendous condemnation of their wicked fellowmen, and scarcely less so, of fallen angels.—This sense is the only one admissible. It is also intrinsically true, and of immense moral power ; and moreover harmonizes perfectly with Christ’s own minute description of that judgment scene.

It is also entirely pertinent to Paul's argument here. If the saints are to live such lives that Jesus can bring their life-record into court (so to speak) to condemn the wicked at the last day, surely there must be righteousness and equity enough in the church to judge the small matters that may spring up among yourselves. To your shame be it if ye are incompetent to judge the smallest matters of this life!

4. If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

5. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

6. But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

Here Tischendorf very forcibly makes the last clause of v. 4 interrogative—thus:—If ye have occasion to settle questions at issue among brethren pertaining to matters of this life, do ye put on the seat as judges men of *no esteem* in the church—men whom ye would not receive into your church, whose moral character you could not endorse as Christian?

7. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded*?

8. Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your brethren*.

Paul states his doctrine with the utmost precision and explicitness, unqualifiedly condemning this going to law before the civil courts where ungodly men are supposed to preside. Better, he says, to suffer wrong and allow yourselves to be defrauded.—But, alas!—in that church are men who *do* wrong and who defraud even their own brethren! A grave allegation!

As to the practical bearing of Paul's doctrine upon our own times it may be suggested—(a.) That it bears only indirectly upon questions at issue between parties—one in and the other *not* in the church, whether the brother in

the church be prosecutor or defendant. Plainly a brother in the church should use all the judicious means in his power to avoid coming into court as prosecutor, or being forced in as defendant. But Paul's doctrine does not seem to make a rule absolutely forbidding it.

(b.) As to cases wholly within the church, arbitration before chosen men, or the submission of the case to the church in whole, will, in most if not all cases, provide adequate means for settlement without resort to civil law. The advance in sensible jurisprudence under the influence of Christian civilization has made adequate provision for arbitration, and for making its decisions final before the law.

9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Paul is startled by the presence of flagrant sin in that church (horrible incest and litigations before the ungodly), and solemnly fears that the tone of common morality has sunk dangerously low. Have ye forgotten, or never known, that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Are not some of you deceiving yourselves on this point to your destruction? The gospel doctrine puts no truth in clearer light or with greater emphasis than this;—that these sins of the flesh (most of them are of this sort)—all bold, unblushing offences—preclude men from God's pure kingdom. Here it occurs to Paul that some of his flock at Corinth are not of this class, but “have been washed, sanctified, justified”—a fine setting forth of what the Gospel through the blood of Christ and the grace of the Spirit, does for human souls.

12. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

13. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats : but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord ; and the Lord for the body.

14. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his own power.

V. 12 has no apparent connection of thought with the previous part of the chapter. It is a new theme—the same which he resumes in Chap. 8 and 10. In 10 : 23 we find nearly the same words as here, the last clause, however, being there—“All things do not edify ;” here, “I will not be brought under the power of any”—I will be a slave to no appetite. We may suppose that Paul wished to discuss the law of conscience in regard to meats that had been or might have been offered to an idol ; that he took up the subject here, but was diverted to a kindred subject relating to the use and abuse of the body ; and consequently, deferring the former, proceeded to the latter—the sin of fornication, which leads the thought through the balance of this chapter, and, in its various aspects, through the whole of Chapter 7.

Meats are provided of God in the realm of nature for the necessities of the body : the body has its natural adaptations for meat : but God will ultimately abolish both the belly and the meats. Their sphere is only for the present. God will soon put them both away as having fulfilled their mission.—While they exist, let it be remembered that the body has nobler ends than fornication. It was created for the service of the Lord, and should be held sacred to that service. In Paul’s antithetic style, he suggests that the Lord is also *for the body*—devoting, pledging his divine power for the resurrection and glorification of this body in the end. This great fact—the resurrection—is obviously in Paul’s thought—brought out fully in what follows :—“The Lord hath both raised up Christ’s human body, and will in his own time raise up our bodies by a similar glorious resurrection. Here, as everywhere, the raising of Jesus by the power of God is the pledge and also the illustration of the future resurrection of the bodies of all his saints.

15. Know ye not that your bodies are the members

of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of a harlot? God forbid.

16. What! know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

17. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

18. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

19. What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in you*, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Our bodies are “the members of Christ,” in the sense, not of being the organs of his human body, but organs of these bodies which are really and wholly his, for all service, created for him and consecrated (so they should be) for whatever service they are adapted. As our souls and all their utmost powers are the Lord's, so also are our bodies the Lord's.—Now shall I tear away these bodily organs from the ownership and use of Christ, and give them to a harlot? Horrible!

The turn given in v. 17 is noticeable; he who joins himself to the Lord as if under the marriage bond and its relations, becomes one with him, not in body but in spirit. Such union with a harlot makes the parties one in body—this union with the Lord, one in spirit.

Flee fornication, as ye would a pursuing, deadly foe. Other sins work their ruin outside of man's body: this is sin against the body itself.—Alas! how many murdered bodies sink rotting to their graves, witnessing to the fearful truth of these words!

The Christian doctrine—your bodies temples of the Holy Ghost—should smite down all temptation to this sin! The Holy Ghost *within you*, offering his pure and blessed presence and joy, asking only that the temple be kept unpolluted;—how should ye hail this promise and welcome this best gift of heaven!

The improved text closes v. 20 with the words—“Therefore glorify God in your bodies”—omitting the words—“and in your spirit which are God's.” The body

is the special theme here—the only thing germain to the argument.



CHAPTER VII.

THIS chapter is unique, treating of one general subject, yet under several distinct and various aspects ;—the general subject being the sexual and marital relations :—specially—the mutual duties of husbands and wives (v. 1–9); directions in regard to the withdrawing [“departing,”] of the wife and “putting away” by the husband (v. 10, 11); the case of families in which one party becomes christian while the other remains heathen (v. 12–16). Christianity does not disrupt society, or require change of life-business (v. 17–24). Concerning virgins; the wisdom of marrying and giving in marriage (v. 25–40).

Of this chapter in general it may be noticed that it was elicited by questions propounded to Paul in writing ; that these questions were sprung upon the church at Corinth, perhaps, [not certainly] by the appearance among them of ascetic notions which contravened the law of nature and the law of God relating to marriage ; and almost certainly by the prevailing corruption of society in Corinth—a city which seems to have surpassed most cities of its time in general licentiousness.

Also let us note that we nowhere else see so broad a line drawn between what Paul said on his own personal judgment, and what he taught as from the Spirit of the Lord.

1. Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me : *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*
2. Nevertheless *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.
3. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence : and likewise also the wife unto the husband.
4. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband : and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5. Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer: and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

6. But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment.

7. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

8. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

9. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

These directions for the married have at least the merit of being put in terms that need no explanation.—In v. 6, it were better to translate not “permission” but “concession.” I say this out of concession to the demands of the sexual nature—and according to my personal judgment, and not by commandment from the Lord.

10. And unto the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: Let not the wife depart from *her* husband:

11. And if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

These verses refer to cases of intentional separation, supposed to be occasioned by want of harmony and love; by disagreements, quarrels, alienations. Noticeably the wife is said to “depart;” the husband, to “put away his wife”—in the former case; of her own motion; in the latter by expulsion on the part of her husband. The husband does not “depart;” nor the wife expel him.—In Corinthian society the wife is the weaker party and is therefore before us here as the party aggrieved, and either seeking relief by leaving, or suffering under forcible expulsion.—In these cases Paul speaks, not upon his own authority but upon the Lord’s, commanding the wife not to depart; or, if she does, to remain without marrying again, or if possible, to be reconciled to her husband. To remain unmarried would leave the door open for such reconciliation.

tion.—The husband is also forbidden to put away his wife.—Thus Christianity brought its full power to bear upon the permanence of the marriage relation and against its disruption under this class of divisive influences.

12. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13. And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

These verses put a case of a sort very likely to occur when the gospel was making converts from heathenism;—a christian man having a heathen wife;—a christian woman having a heathen husband. Hence almost inevitably the question must arise whether christianity required the believing husband to put away his heathen wife, or the believing wife to leave her unbelieving husband.—Paul answers this on his own authority, and most decidedly in the negative, provided the heathen party were willing to remain. In v. 14, he assigns his reason; “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and also the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband: else were you children unclean; now they are holy.”

The words—“holy” and “unclean” as applied to children [tekna]—offspring by birth, must certainly be taken in the putative, not the intrinsically essential sense—*i. e.* the children are nominally christian, not pagan; the family becomes a christian household by the christianity of either of the parents. Whatever prerogatives belong to the christian family accrue to this by virtue of the faith of either the husband or the wife.—I see no occasion to dissent from this very obvious sense of these words, nor can I see reason to doubt that Paul had distinctly in mind the covenant relation which christian households sustain to God in reference to the consecration of their offspring to him under the great promise, “I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.” Paul interprets this cove-

nant to apply to “thee” in a case where only one of the two parents is a believer. Most tenderly and mercifully God provides that the personal faith of either parent shall be honored as sufficient ground to claim all the prerogatives and promises of this most precious covenant.

In v. 14, the older manuscripts read ;—not “sanctified by the husband” but sanctified by the “*brother*.”

15. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*: but God hath called us to peace.

16. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife?

In vs. 12, 13, is one alternative—“if he or she be willing to remain ;”—Here is the other alternative : If the unbelieving party is *not* willing to remain but in fact *departs*; then this is the law or rule of proceeding ;—Let him or her depart. If you cannot prevent it, you must submit to it; you need not feel yourself *enslaved*, in the bondage of unrest, anxiety, agony of conscience ; for God hath called us to peace and would have us make the best of circumstances so peculiarly trying as these.

Here we must meet the very grave question—whether this “departing,” or this “letting depart,” is simply a quiet separation, at the will of the unbelieving party who insists on going, yet involving no real disruption of the marriage bond ; or is a real divorce, absolutely terminating the marriage relation.

I answer ;—The former most certainly, and for these reasons :

1. This “departing” is manifestly the same which is contemplated in vs. 12-14. The same words are here as there, and this case (as said above) is simply the other alternative.

2. To signify a real divorce, other language should and would have been used (e. g. as in Rom. 7: 2, 3) :—words which would imply and involve the severing of the marriage bond.

3. The context (v. 16) certainly assumes that the believing party, thus forsaken, should still hope, pray, labor, for the conversion of the unbelieving party ; and of course if successful, then reunite the family and resume the mari-

tal duties. By no means does christianity allow the door to be closed against the reunion of husband and wife, parted by unlike sympathies of christian faith and life, but brought into harmony by the praying wife saving her husband or the praying husband saving the wife.

4. The consequences which in that age must have ensued from interpreting this passage to authorize real divorcee, would have been fearful ; disreputable to christianity, ruinous to the honor of the gospel.

Hence I must construe this “ letting depart ” to signify merely that God relieves the suffering party from painful anxieties, and would invite him or her to a quiet peace of mind—a state most favorable to prayer and christian labor for the conversion of the offended and absenting party.

17. But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

18. Is any man called being circumcised ? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision ? let him not be circumcised,

19. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

20. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

21. Art thou called *being* a servant ? care not for it : but if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather.

22. For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord’s freeman : likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ’s servant.

23. Ye are bought with a price ; be not ye the servants of men.

24. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

The doctrine in this passage is entirely simple ;—christianity does not disrupt society. It has no mission to break up existing relations, whether of circumcision or of servitude. Let converted men follow their former vocation (supposed to be one that does not in itself involve sin).—Their relations to the Lord are of supreme importance, quite eclipsing all relations to man. But they may serve God in any of the innocent callings of common life.

25. Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

26. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say*, that *it is* good for a man so to be.

27. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

28. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

29. But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

30. And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;

31. And they that use this world, as not abusing *it*: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

“Concerning virgins” covers the whole subject of remaining unmarried, applied to either sex, and also the collateral question of fathers’ giving daughters in marriage. It is really the expediency of marriage especially as affected by existing circumstances of hardship and peril from without as well as of temptation from within;—involving therefore special cares in the family relation. On this question Paul had no commandment from the Lord; and the case being so very peculiar in its circumstances, this should not be expected.—Paul’s judgment seems to be that marriage is and should be the common law of human society; but that some deviation from this common law might be wise under the very special circumstances then existing. Yet he holds that even under those circumstances marriage would not be a sin. Such as marry would have more trouble in the flesh; my advice would spare you that trouble.

Paul’s words—“The time is short”—raise again the oft-mooted question;—*Did Paul expect the second coming of Christ very shortly?*—Olshausen thinks he certainly did at that moment; but subsequently changed his mind to more sober views!

From this I must dissent, taking the word “time”—[*kairos**] in its usual sense of *season*—the present state of the *times*; and the participle (in the auth. vers. “*short*”) in the better established sense of straitened—peculiar for straitness, trouble. So construed, the statement is a cogent reason why the married should be as though they were not; the weeping as though they wept not;—all as if great revolutions might be close at hand and every class should be prepared for extreme emergencies. The existing state of things was almost certain to pass away soon.

32. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

33. But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.

34. There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.

35. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

The points in this passage are clear; marriage brings care, and also new objects of love as well as of attention and labor. Hence either man or woman may be more free from diverting avocations, and better able (other things being equal) to devote themselves supremely to Christian labor, if they remain unmarried. Yet he would not have this advice become a snare to them to choose a course of life which they might not well carry out. His only aim is (v. 35) to counsel a way of life that may be reputable [honorable, blameless], and also one that should provide for assiduous service for God without distraction.

* Of the two Greek words for “*time*” [*chronos* and *kairos*] the former suggests duration—*i. e.* is *chronological*; the latter, the *quality*, the *character* of the time—as here. In English we naturally use the plural in this sense; the *times* are troublous. Here Paul uses the latter word, not the former, and hence cannot be supposed to refer to duration.

36. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of *her* age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not : let them marry.

37. Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

38. So then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well ; but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better.

Here are real difficulties of interpretation, on the points ;—Who are these parties and what are their respective relations ?—Some of the words and also circumstances favor the view that a father gives his daughter in marriage ; others seem to assume a man betrothed yet not married, but supporting or at least retaining his betrothed virgin, deferring marriage.—In the first clause of v. 36, the Greek allows this more general statement : If a man thinks there may be disgraceful conduct in the case of his virgin—leaving it so general as to apply to misdemeanors either on her part or on his, or both.—The last clause of the verse—“Let them marry”—is very indefinite, so that it may apply, either to a man betrothed (as above), or to a father permitting the marriage of his daughter to another.—v. 37 applies naturally to a man supporting or at least retaining his betrothed without marriage ; but v. 38 as clearly contemplates a father giving his daughter in marriage.—On the whole, it seems to me that we must say—Either these two cases were not clearly distinguished in Paul’s mind : or the delicacy of the subject induced a choice of words not altogether definite as they come to us ; or we have not precisely the words he used.—But this opinion is expressed modestly, as under a sense of extreme difficulties.

Of course it is assumed that betrothal in the usage of the times often preceded marriage by a somewhat protracted interval.

39. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth ; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will ; only in the Lord.

40. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment : and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

Obviously Paul permits a widow to marry again—only let it be “in the Lord ;”—if a Christian herself, only to one who is also a Christian. Under the emergencies then pressing or pending, he judges that the unmarried state would be the more happy.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE subject of eating meat that has been offered to an idol is here treated as a *question of conscience*.

1. Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

2. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

3. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

On this point we are all sure that we have knowledge. But for the practical working of this matter, it is entirely vital that we have love also. Knowledge puffs up ; love builds up, solidly—and makes noble characters. Much self-conceit proves a man to know nothing yet as he ought to know ; for the knowledge that is without love is valueless. If a man truly loves God, he is known [and approved also] of him. According to a common Hebrew idiom, “*know*” here carries the sense of being approved—known favorably ; known in the sense that God *shows* that he knows him.

All this prepares the way for the just exposition of this question. There is here more need of love than of knowledge—the love that will induce a Christian to shape his course for his Christian neighbor’s good, and not according to knowledge that has no love controlling it.

4. As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an

idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there* is none other God but one.

5. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) (1 Cor. viii. 4.)

6. But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

We all know full well that an idol is a mere nothing, a simple non-entity; and that there is no God but the One Supreme. True, there are what are called gods, without number; but we recognize only the One Infinite God, of whom as the source of all existence come all things; and we are (not *in* Him, but) *nnto* [for] him—(the Greek word being not *en* but *eis*). One Lord Jesus Christ by whom as instrumental Creator are all things, and ourselves made by him.

From this doctrine, that an idol is a mere nothing, it follows that meat offered to such an idol is the same essentially after as before, the consecrating of meat to a mere nothing amounting to nothing.

7. Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

But though this may be very true yet all men do not know it.—In the clause “some with conscience of the idol,” the older manuscripts have it, not “conscience” but usage. Some men, controlled by the usage or habit of thinking it to be something real eat this meat as if the eating involved the worship of an idol; and so, their conscience, being ill-informed [“weak”] is defiled. Through their ignorance they have committed sin.—Yet (v. 8) (he would say) bear in mind that this sin lies strictly, neither in the eating nor in the not eating; but in doing what in their view was wrong. For the eating or the not eating of meat cannot of itself make us either better or worse before God.

9. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.

10. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols :

11. And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ?

12. But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

If a man of weak [ill-informed] conscience, who honestly supposes that eating idol-offered meat is worship of the idol, were to see you eating such meat in an idol temple, and should thus be induced, despite of and against his own conscience, to do the same himself, this would be in him real idolatry, and might ruin his soul. Shall thy superior knowledge become thus a fatal snare to thy weak brother for whom Christ died ?—Sinning thus against a weak brother, is sinning against Christ.

With the moral grandeur of the noblest self-denial and self-sacrifice, Paul declares his principle and purpose ;—that if eating meat would cause his brother to stumble and fall, he will eat no more meat to the end of time. No spirit of self-indulgence should tempt him to imperil the soul of his Christian brother.

Paul will not say—I have my rights and privileges, from the enjoyment of which no man's foolish notions shall debar me ;—will not say—The man ought to have known better than to stumble in that senseless way ;—will not plead ;—“ What have I to do with another's whims ? ”—Not so, in Paul's view, does love for the souls of men plead for self-gratification to the peril of weak brethren.



CHAPTER IX.

THIS chapter throughout is Paul's self-vindication against the slanders and detractions of certain parties in

the church, who decried his apostolic authority, and who apparently grudged him his bread.—If the question be raised—Who were those parties? We must answer with no reasonable doubt—men of Jewish antecedents and of Jewish spirit. We may infer this from the general fact that Paul's personal enemies were from that class, at least during all his earlier labors; and from the particular facts evinced here—that they conceded privileges to other apostles, to the brethren of the Lord, and to Peter, which they denied to Paul; and also from the circumstance that Paul reasoned with them on this point from the Mosaic law, the authority of which they must have recognized. (See v. 9–13).

1. Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

2. If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

The older manuscript authorities reverse the order of the first two questions, putting first, “Am I not free?”—As to the sense of this word, “free,” it cannot be the servitude of slavery; but must be his independence as an apostle. He maintains that he is no second-rate apostle; fills no subordinate sphere under control of higher apostles; but is amenable to Jesus Christ only. One of the slanders against him seems to have rested on these circumstances—that he was not one of the original twelve; was not taught and trained by Christ; and therefore must hold a very subordinate position as compared with the other apostles.

Further, they seem to have denied him the honor of having founded that church, and gathered to Christ the converts who composed it.—This was at once, false, mean and cruel.

3. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this:

4. Have we not power to eat and to drink?

5. Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

6. Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

7. Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

In v. 3, we may read—My apology or defence to those who judge me—who assume to sit in judgment over me.

Have we not “power”—in the more precise sense of the right, the prerogative or privilege, if we so choose.—The prerogative of eating and drinking at your expense, *i. e.* the right not merely to eat in order to live, but to be supported by those for whom we labor.

“To lead about a sister, a wife,” means, a Christian wife—a wife provided she be a Christian.—V. 5 assumes that the other apostles including Peter and the brethren of the Lord (of whom James was one) were married men, and had their wives with them in their gospel labors.—In v. 7, Paul reasons from the analogy of other avocations in life. The soldier who gives his service to his country does not board himself, but expects his country to supply his rations. So he who plants and cultivates a vineyard. The common sense of mankind will extend this principle to him who labors in the gospel.

8. Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

9. For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

10. Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that plougheth should plough in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

12. If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are not we rather?* Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

Do I say this on mere human authority? Does not

the law of God teach the same?—See this law through Moses in Dent. 25: 4, quoted by Paul in 1 Tim. 5: 18 also; “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox while treading out the corn,”—not precisely the same ox who does this service, but while he is doing it. To muzzle him at any time when he needs to eat would be bad; to muzzle him when his food is in sight, is still worse.—Paul seems to assume that God gave this law, not because of his care for oxen alone, but to teach men to be humane and just even to brute animals, and on a still broader principle, to give every laborer his due reward. Perhaps he meant to say only that the chief reason for the law was not the Lord’s care for beasts, but for *men* whose moral training is an interest indefinitely more important than the mere food of oxen.—In v. 11, the force of the argument lies in the obviously greater value of spiritual things than of carnal—the spiritual being of eternal consequence and measureless value, while carnal things are at best short-lived and insignificant.—Is it then a great thing for you to pay for priceless blessings with your cheap and perishable dust?—If you allow the claims of other apostles upon you for bread, will you deny it to us? Yet we have never either asserted our rights, or taken the least compensation from you for our services; but have cheerfully suffered all privations and hardships, lest through your niggardliness we might prejudice our labors in the gospel.

13. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

The rule of the law of Moses (Num. 18; 31, and Deut. 18; 1, etc.) that both priests and Levites should subsist upon the offerings of the people at the temple and the altar must have been well known to all Jews, and ought to have been entirely conclusive as to Paul’s claims.

15. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

16. For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing

to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17. For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation *of the gospel* is committed unto me.

18. What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

Paul had taken from them no compensation for his labors, nor did he say these things for the sake of it thereafter; for he would sooner die than be precluded from bearing this testimony to his self-sacrifice and to his labor upon tents for his living. Elsewhere he gives his reasons for this conduct toward them; *viz.*, their jealousy, suspicion and prejudice against him were so intense and unreasonable that he knew they would take every advantage of it to malign his name and to weaken if not destroy his moral power among them. They were too mean to be allowed to contribute to his support!—Not all of them (we may hope) but so many that prudence demanded this policy.

I preach the gospel here at Corinth (Paul would say) under a resistless conviction that God sends me and holds me to it. If I do it cheerfully, God rewards me; if I do it reluctantly, still the burden is on me and I have no alternative but to bear it and fulfil my trust.

By making the gospel without charge to you, I do not allow my rights in this matter to prejudice the success of my labors.

19. For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21. To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain

the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

23. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

The same principle holds in all these cases. Free as to all men, he yet became the humble servant of all that he might gain the more. In particular,—though under no personal obligation to the people of Corinth, he yet laid out his best strength to serve them for no consideration of pay from them. To Jews, he made every concession possibly consistent for him to make that he might gain the Jews. For the sake of those under law, he conformed to their usages as far as possible in order to gain them. To Gentiles not under law, he pursued the same policy for the same purpose, and all this for the gospel's sake that he might share with them its blessed fruits.

Paul declares that no personal considerations should detain him from conforming himself in all things where he wisely and conscientiously could, to the prejudices and usages of men that he might reach them with gospel truth and salvation. All the particular details of this conforming to men of diverse tastes and ways he has not specified. It was enough to declare his principles of action and appeal to their personal knowledge as to the facts.

24. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27. But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Such a life might well be compared to running a race or striving for the mastery in the ancient games so well known at Corinth. They knew very well that many ran in one competitive race; yet only one obtained the crown, and he, the man who trained himself most rigidly and ran

with most intense and desperate endeavor. Yet they have before them only a perishable chaplet ; we, a crown immortal, imperishable. So therefore do I run—not as one who has no goal—no definite aim before him and no crown to win, but skips round as if for mere amusement.—So I play the boxer—not beating the air, but giving solid blows for best effect. “Beating the air” was a proverbial expression to signify not work but play.—Paul’s word for “keep my body under” signifies that he put in solid blows in real earnest, and did not spare the flesh. In regard to sensual indulgence of appetite he made his body, his very humble servant, holding it in with close rein ; and he did this, lest after having preached to others, he should lose his own soul ! —Yet this was not asceticism ; was not crucifying the flesh for the merit or the vain glory of it ; but it was keeping fleshly appetite in close subjection to enlightened reason and conscience and to the claims of God. It must not stand in the way of his supreme devotion of his utmost powers to his gospel work and to every service assigned him by his Great Master.



CHAPTER X.

FOR the sake of its great lessons of moral admonition and instruction, Paul brings before his readers the case of ancient Israel, baptized unto Moses (v. 1, 2) ; all eating the same manna and drinking from the same smitten rock (v. 3, 4) ; yet many of them provoking God and overthrown in the wilderness (v. 5). Examples of warning to us against idolatry, fornication, tempting Christ and murmuring—all for our admonition (v. 6–12). God who suffers temptation to befall us provides in his providence for our escape and by his grace for our bearing it (v. 13) ; against participating in idol-worship (v. 14, 15) ; illustrated by our communion at the Lord’s table and by Israel eating of his altar (v. 16–18) ; not that an idol is anything ; really idol-worship is a sacrifice to devils, with whom Christian men should have no communion (v. 19–22). The law of conscience in this thing (v. 23–30) ; the broad principle of doing all for the glory of God (v. 31–33).

1. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea :

2. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ;

“I would not have you ignorant” calls these facts to their very special attention.—The first point is the miraculous passage of the Red Sea between the lofty walls of its waters on each side, and overshadowed from behind with the Lord’s pillar of cloud and fire. These scenes are here for their significance as God’s endorsement of Moses and his solemn pledging of the people to accept and follow him as their divinely appointed Leader. Baptism is here (be it specially noted), not in its ritual, external form, but in its spiritual significance. It has sometimes happened that men specially anxious to get scriptural authority for one or the other mode of baptism, have sought it here ;—some finding immersion in this going down into the sea and coming out of it : others, finding, as it has seemed to them, the mode of sprinkling in the affusion from the mist of the sea, but more in the drippings from the cloud.—The former are prone to overlook the point that Egypt’s hosts and not Israel’s received the immersion in the Red Sea waters; while the latter seem equally to have overlooked the circumstance that this was not a rain-cloud, but a pillar of cloud-form which enshrined the manifested presence of Jehovah—a wall of blackness as it faced toward Egypt, but a radiance of glory as it shone upon God’s covenant people ;—in all which there could have been no allusion to the form of baptism. Perhaps both sides in this controversy need to be reminded that Paul’s allusions to baptism are usually peculiar in this one respect—that they make prominent its spiritual significance, and not its ritual external form. Indeed we may say they make every thing of the former and nothing of the latter.—This will seem strange if not even unaccountable to those who are accustomed to exalt the form of the institution ; but Paul’s thought and heart were obviously on the spirit and not the form.

Here Paul thinks of baptism *into a name* [or a person] as expressing a binding, sacred *obligation of allegiance* to that name as a recognized Leader. When the God of Israel would inaugurate Moses as the Leader of his covenant peo-

ple by his own sublime endorsement, and would lay his people under supreme obligation to receive and follow him as such, he performed this act in the most public manner before all Egypt and indeed before all the earth, by giving that rod in his hand a glorious miracle-working power;—then by placing him before the eyes of Israel and commanding him—“ Speak to the children of Israel that they *go forward*; lift thou up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea” (Ex. 14: 15, 16).—This stupendous scene, coupled with the pillar of cloud and of fire, constituted the baptism here referred to—a baptism which bound the nation to accept Moses as God’s chosen Leader of his people. This and this only is what baptism means in this passage.

The manna-bread and the rock-waters are here for the same purpose, additional facts mightily endorsing Moses as God’s servant, and binding the nation to accept and follow him as such and God as their supreme Lord and King.

3. And did all eat the same spiritual meat.

4. And did all drink the same spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them : and that Rock was Christ.

Beyond question this spiritual meat [food] was the manna—“ bread from heaven,” as the Psalmist has it (Ps. 105: 40 and 78: 24, 25), and called “ spiritual ” with reference to its miraculous and heavenly origin. So also the “ spiritual drink ” was in itself only water, but is said here to be “ spiritual ” because brought forth by miracle from the smitten rock. Its waters, for abundance, supplied a thirsty nation, and, for *duration* of supply, seem to have met their wants at least so long as they remained in that part of the wilderness.—Noticeably the imperfect tense used by Paul in the second clause of v. 4 (“ for they *drank* ”) clearly expresses long continued action, and therefore fully assumes the fact of supply for a long time. Fitly Paul thinks of this rock-supply of living water as representing Christ—in his own phrase it “ *was Christ*. ” No living fountain of waters in the desert can be richer than Christ to a world perishing with thirst for the waters of salvation.

Before we follow out in detail this line of facts, let a

word be said upon Paul's purposed antithesis between the "all" five times repeated (in v. 1-4) on the one side, and the great majority [“*many* of them” v. 5.] on the other. “*All* our fathers were under the cloud;” “*all* passed through the sea;” “*all* were baptized unto Moses;” “*all* did eat;” “*all* did drink;” but over against this, the greater part—most of them—fell under God’s sore displeasure and perished! *All* saw the miracles; *all* had the resistless testimony of their senses to a present God, their glorious Benefactor;—but most of them were unblessed by any or even all these agencies.—There are great lessons in these facts. Men are not saved by ritualities; nor by opportunities; nor by their testimonies for God; nor are they saved as nations in the mass, but only as individuals, on the condition of their own personal faith and obedience.—It should be borne in mind that Paul is here speaking to Jews—“our fathers;” and felt therefore the importance of warning them against the great and fatal mistake of supposing that their nation was to be saved *en masse*, nationally—because they were the seed of Abraham and heirs of all God’s blessings by virtue of God’s covenant with him.

5. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7. Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9. Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

“God was not well pleased”—aims to express very mildly the appalling truth that God was exceedingly *displeased*, and therefore overthrew them by thousands in the wilderness. The record is sad but most instructive—teaching the very lesson which Paul here indicates—not to lust after evil things as they did—said apparently with reference to their

mumuring against Moses and the manna, and lustfully sighing for the flesh-pots of Egypt (Num. 11.)—Next is the warning against idolatry (always timely at Corinth), drawn from the case of the golden calf, when “the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel, shout and dance, in imitation of the orgies of idol-worshipping heathen. Ex. 32 gives this sad and terrible lesson.—Next is the warning against fornication, drawn from another page of this history of Israel, under social temptation from the licentious daughters of Moab (Num. 25:). The number who fell before the plague of that awful day, Paul puts at 23,000.—The case referred to in v. 9, is that recorded Num. 21:4–9, which occurred as the people were compassing the land of Edom, and “their soul was much discouraged because of the way.”—Whereas our authorized version has it—“tempted Christ,” the older manuscripts [S. and V.] give it—“tempted the Lord;” and (A. the Alexandrian) “tempted God.” The history in Numbers has it—“spake against God and against Moses;” and the people confess—“We have spoken against the Lord.”—Such variations show how readily these divine names are interchanged.—For their sin “the Lord sent among the people fiery serpents, and much people died.”—The murmuring (v. 10), was that upon the report of the spies (Num. 14). The destruction sent upon the nation for this sin was peculiar in this one respect, that it was not executed suddenly and followed soon by respite, but its threatened judgments fell upon all the adult men (over twenty years of age) except only Caleb and Joshua, and doomed them to fall in their long protracted wanderings of thirty eight years in the wilderness, so that not a man of them should enter the promised land. It was a terrible visitation—those early deaths, in swift and fearful succession, sweeping men down in the flower of their days, and leaving only those two men of patriarchal age, out of all the tribes, surviving to cross the Jordan.—So God remembered against the nation this awful sin of murmuring unbelief! The sadness of this great and long-protracted judgment passes down the ages in that dirge song of Moses (Ps. 90).

11. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

These visitations of righteous judgment befel them as examples of warning—as said here, “happened to them typically—but were put on record (Paul said) for the admonition of ourselves upon whom the two ends of the ages have met. This is obviously the sense of these words of Paul. Their explanation turns upon the usage of the old prophets who call the period before Christ the present age, and the period after Christ, the future or the coming age, or (sometimes) “the latter or last days.” The two ends of these ages—the last end of the first and the first end of the second, met upon the men of Paul’s generation.

The one comprehensive point of all these admonitions is put here; *viz.* against self-conceit and presumption. Let him who thinketh himself to be standing in all safety take heed lest he fall. Such presumption is in itself supremely perilous. Throwing men off their guard, it leaves them exposed to any and every form of assault; and Satan is never slow to seize his opportunity.

13. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

The line of connecting thought here should be noticed—*viz.* on this wise: Do not suppose that temptation is about to befall you with unprecedented frequency and super-human, resistless force; not so. Thus far no temptation has befallen you other than human; and moreover, God is faithful to all his promises of help, and will graduate the temptation to your moral power of resistance; and will, moreover, provide in his providence a way of escape—of egress out of your straits, so that ye shall still come off victorious.—Obviously this verse gives us the doctrine of Paul as to the principles or laws of temptation as permitted and administered in this world toward God’s people. Only so much as (with watchfulness and prayer) they can bear; never more, or oftener; always for the purpose of increasing your moral strength, for the results of wholesome discipline, and for its precious fruits of maturer Christian

experience in fortitude and trust.—The comforting truth is that the whole administration of it is in the hands of Him who has called us unto himself and has promised to keep us through his grace unto the end.

It is never becoming that Christians should make temptation for themselves gratuitously, or defy it vain-gloriously; but they may well accept without a murmur or a fear whatever God may send, reposing their faith for help on such promises as we have here. Then their experiences of help in the hour of need will both refresh them from the fatigues of conflict and gird them anew for other victories.

14. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

15. I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say.

16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?

17. For we *being* many are one bread *and* one body : for we are all partakers of that one bread.

18. Behold Israel after the flesh ; are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar ?

The subject of *idolatry* involved nice points and required thoughtful, sensible discriminations. So Paul suggests in the outset.—On the one side, to allow themselves to commune with idolaters in their feasts within their temples would involve them in great sin ; for does not the communion at the Lord's table bring all Christians into closest fellowship with Christ ? Also under the old temple worship, did not all who ate from the same sacrifice become partakers of the common altar and so participate in the worship of Israel's God ? These cases for illustration are given to show the real significance of partaking at the feasts in honor of heathen idols.

19. What say I then ? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything ?

20. But I *say* that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God ; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

21. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup

of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

22. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Here ye will need sharp and clear discrimination.— Does my doctrine of non-communion with idol-worshippers imply that an idol is a real power, a very god? By no means. Or, that what is offered to an idol becomes intrinsically anything else than it was before? Not at all. But the fact is that the Gentiles who suppose themselves to be sacrificing to their idol are really sacrificing to devils and not to God. They honor the devil and not God. The devil is the only power behind the face of the idol-image. All else—the carved wood or the molten silver—is absolutely nothing.—Now I would not have you desire the cup of devils or partake at the table of devils. It would be infinite folly to provoke Almighty God to wrath by such communion with devils.

23. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

24. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.

25. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that eat*, asking no question for conscience sake:

26. For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

27. If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go: whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake.

28. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience' sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:

29. Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience?

30. For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

Here comes up a new aspect of this matter—*viz.*, not

the sitting at table with idol-worshippers in their temple ; but the eating or not eating of meat once presented before the idol, but subsequently sold in the public market. In this case the fact of its having been once offered before an idol might or might not be known.

Here Paul lays down his doctrine as to this case.—First, if you go into the market you need ask no questions for the sake of your own conscience. The meat you see there is real meat—not made anything else than meat by any magic change wrought upon it in the idol temple. The earth is the Lord's, and this meat is of his making. Eat it therefore with no trouble of conscience on your own account.—But if your heathen neighbor say to you—“This meat is offered in sacrifice to idols : I am about to eat of it in honor of my idol :—Will you sit by and partake with me ?”—Then you must refuse most decidedly—not because of your own conscience, but because of his.

In v. 23, Paul puts the doctrine in a very general form. Things may be entirely lawful for me which yet are not expedient because they may offend another man's conscience. They may be harmless to me and yet injurious to others—in which case I must deny myself rather than bring moral evil upon my neighbor.—In v. 24, the word “wealth” in the sense here, is obsolete. It were better to put in no word there than this, reading it—“Let no man seek his own, but every man another's.” Then whatever special sense you put upon “his own,” you put also upon “another's”—which is Paul's meaning. Not his own comfort, but another's comfort ; not his own interest, but another's interest, etc.

31. Whethier therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God :

33. Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

Here the doctrine crystallizes into its most comprehensive form. Let all your eating, all your drinking, all your doings of whatsoever sort, be for the glory of God. Have your eye wholly and only upon pleasing God and doing his

will ; and if the deed bear directly upon fellow-men, let it be to their real welfare, “ serving your generation according to the will of God.”—Giving no offence—no occasion of stumbling—to any man, Jew or Gentile, and by no means to the church of God. Such is my doctrine, and such is my life. I please not myself, but seek the spiritual good of all men that they may be saved.—A pure and blessed life, sublime in its moral grandeur, fit model for imitation in every age.



C H A P T E R XI.

The general theme of this chapter is one—the proprieties of church life, specially in their Christian assemblies ; yet in two parts—the first (vs. 1–16) being more specifically church *manners*—things of etiquette—*e. g.*, as to covering or not covering the head :—the second part (vs. 17–34) of more grave importance—the proper method in observance of the love-feast and the Lord’s Supper.

1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.
2. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.

V. 1. ought to have been put at the close of Chapter 10, where in thought it belongs.—“ Even as,” I take to mean here—not precisely—so far as I follow Christ, but rather *inasmuch as* I follow Christ, and therefore present before you a palpable, potent example of the life ye should live. He assumes that he himself follows Christ.—V. 2 is complimentary for the sake of conciliating, to prepare the way for the exceptions he was obliged to make. In fact they had not kept quite fully “the *traditions*” Gr. (*i. e.*, instructions) which he had given. Paul’s word has a broader significance than our “ordinances,” used for baptism and the supper.

3. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ ; and the head of the woman is the man ; and the head of Christ is God.

4. Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoreth his head.

5. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7. For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

These gradations of dignity on the ascending scale—woman; man; Christ; God—Paul not infrequently brings to view (*e. g.* 1 Cor. 3: 21–23—apostles; the church; Christ; God). This gradation is the ultimate ground or principle on which church etiquette rests.

The special difficulty of the passage lies in applying the same principle or law as the ground for man's uncovering his head, and for woman's covering hers. Man in prayer uncovers his head in deference to God, his superior. Woman praying or prophesying covers hers in deference to man, her superior. Can this be precisely the logic of Paul?—Is not the law of nature this rather:—that woman covers her head as an expression of modesty and as a protest against vain display?

In the case of woman Paul puts long hair and the veil or other head-covering on the same footing, and finds the propriety of the usage in her relations, not to God but to man.—In v. 7, his doctrine seems to be that man is the best and highest expression of the divine image; and analogously, that woman is the best expression or manifestation of man's glory. For (v. 8) man was not produced originally from the woman; but, according to the Scripture, woman was from man (Gen. 2: 21–23). Neither (v. 9) was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man—because no helpmeet for him was found among all the orders of created beings (Gen. 2: 18–23).

10. For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels.

Two words here are difficult; (a) “power ;” (b) “angels.”—As to the word “power” (*Exousia*) the opinion best supported makes it mean the veil as a symbol of her subordinate relation to her husband, or (shall we say?) to intimate that she reserved her beauty for him, and did not make herself public property, nor display her charms for general admiration.—Some support for this usage of the word is found in the Septuagint of Gen. 20: 16, where the Hebrew—“a covering of the eyes,” becomes in the Sept. “the honor of the face.”

“Angels” (the word meaning strictly *messengers*) are most probably evil-disposed men, spies, obtruding themselves into Christian worshipping assemblies to find occasion for traducing them before their enemies. The word may possibly refer to messengers from other churches present for worthy ends, before whom entire decorum would be eminently appropriate. To suppose that angels from heaven or from hell are thought of, is in no manner probable.

11. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12. For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

13. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14. Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.

16. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

“In the Lord,” in human society adjusted under God upon the great laws He has ordained, monasticism has no place. The sexes were constituted to associate together. As woman was originally of (out of) the man; so is man born of woman; yet all alike owe their origin to the one Creator, God.

In v. 14, 15, Paul ascribes the universal sentiments of mankind on the points in question to a law of nature. To man, long hair is a shame ; it is effeminate, unmanly. To woman, it is a glory ; its modesty befits her and does her honor.—If on this general subject any one is disposed to contention, resistance ; our appeal is to the *universal usage of the churches*—an authority that rests on their good sense, and should be presumed to have the endorsement of the divine Spirit.

17. Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you ; and I partly believe it.

19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Not to praise, is to blame. The point of fault is that their church gatherings were not unto profit, but unto scandal ;—not to any good result, but rather evil.—In v. 18, we seem to have one class of evils under the name “divisions” [Gr. schisms] ; in v. 19, another class under the word “heresies” [this being also the Greek word].—The former he “partly believed,”—a phrase which might mean either that he believed a part of what he heard, or that he believed in part yet not fully. In the former case the limitation would be in the things stated ;—in the latter, in his faith. I judge that he believed what he had heard to some extent—perhaps he could not determine how far.—These schisms of v. 18, I suppose to be the splits among church members—cliques, parting themselves off from other brethren as wealth, notions of caste, or of social standing, might rule.—The heresies of v. 19, which Paul assumes to be a kind of necessity for purposes of moral trial, may probably be the same which appear in chap. 1: 11, and which lead the discussion in the first four chapters. Of these he says nothing further here, but proceeds to speak of the church-cliques—parties growing out of the caste spirit.

20. When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

21. For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22. What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.

They assembled professedly to celebrate the Lord's Supper; but abused it so egregiously that their celebration was unworthy of the name—Lord's Supper. They utterly vitiated the real ordinance, both in the form and in the spirit.—To understand vs. 21, 22, we need to remember that in primitive usage, the love-feast [the Agapae], immediately preceded the Lord's Supper. To this love-feast, these two verses refer.—In their observance of it they parted themselves into groups, cliques,—each clique or family supplying their own board in exclusive, pie-nic style; the rich providing for themselves luxuriously; the poor but meagerly; and then with not the least respect to the fellowship of a church communion or the decencies of Christian civilization, each grabbed before his fellow what he could get hold of, one ravenously hungry, another besotted with strong drink!—No wonder Paul exclaims—shame! Have ye not houses of your own where the stress of hunger ought to be stayed? Do ye despise the decencies and civilities of the church of God, and disgrace the poor who have nothing?—Shall I praise you for this? Never!

23. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the *same* night in which he was betrayed, took bread:

24. And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25. After the same manner also *he took* the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

This statement of the original institution of the Supper corresponds most closely with that given by Luke (22: 19, 20,)—a fact which confirms the opinion that they both drew from the same source ; that Paul as himself says had his facts direct from Christ himself ; and that Luke (probably) received his account from Paul.—Luke represents that Christ did four things, *viz.*, took bread ; gave thanks ; brake ; distributed ;—and then said—“ This is my body, given for you ; this do in remembrance of me.” This order appears here, and in addition, this : “ As often as ye shall eat, ye do show forth the Lord’s death till he come.”

Matthew and Mark use essentially the same words ; but both omit—“ Do this in remembrance of me,” and also what Paul only says about “ showing forth the Lord’s death till he come ;”—each however adding certain other words (Matt. 26: 26–29, and Mark 14: 22–25).

It should be noted that those abuses at Corinth made it appropriate for Paul to give his authority from Christ himself ; and also to make the great points of the institution entirely distinct and emphatic. Especially this “ showing forth of the Lord’s death till he should come,” was in itself solemnly impressive, and should have rebuked their unpardonable abuse of the sacred ordinance. So also the stress laid upon the point, “ Do this in remembrance of me !” Any real remembrance of Christ would stringently rebuke the spirit of their celebration, and show it to be utterly incompatible with Christ’s ordinance.

27. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.

30. For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32. But when we are judged we are chastened of

the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

These verses aim to set forth the great sin at Corinth in its true light, and to declare its fearful punishment.—“Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” means, guilty of a crime against his very body and blood; guilty of dishonoring that sacred body and blood—of scandalizing this holy supper, the aim of which is to impress on Christian souls their everlasting obligations of gratitude, love and self-sacrifice to Him who has laid down his life for us. This will be greater or less according to the subjective spirit of the act, and especially, the light sinned against. What Paul says here is that, objectively considered, it is against Christ’s sacred body and blood, and must therefore be a fearful crime.

“Let a man examine himself”—turn his thought inward upon his spiritual state and consider his life—that he may see how the significance of this supper applies to his own soul. So, thoughtfully, tenderly, solemnly—let him partake of these symbols, and take in their suggestive significance, the moral lessons they are designed and well adapted to impress.

We must admire the wisdom of this warning, as adapted to the abuses then existing. In their case the points of chief danger were—that the heart might be utterly wrong; that the communicants were thinking of what was utterly irrevlevant, of not the least account, and indeed was positively sinful—their church cliques, their chosen associates, their party and the high social distinction they were enjoying above their poorer brethren! Alas! How could they carry so much selfishness and sin into the presence of their dying Redeemer! How could they so ignore the moral state of their souls, the sins they ought to be confessing and renouncing, the fellowship with Christ’s people they ought to be cherishing, the sense of his amazing compassion and love which should put to shame their social pride!—Paul seems to assume that every Christian will know what self-examination means, and what state of heart is appropriate to this holy communion.

In v. 29. The word “damnation” is too strong to correspond with the Greek word, which means only judgment [krima, not katakrima]. All that Paul said was that

the Lord will *judge* him ; and this judgment he explains (v. 32) as in the first instance a chastening for purposes of moral discipline, and not a visitation of retributive punishment as upon the world of the ungodly.

“ Not discerning the Lord’s body ” means, not discriminating between what represents the Lord’s body and what has no such sacred purpose ; that is, the sin of ignoring the special sacredness of this bread and wine because set apart to represent Christ’s body and blood. To treat these elements as if they had no sacredness greatly dishonored the Lord. It struck a fatal blow at this institution itself ; for it were far better to have no Lord’s supper than one from which the true spirit and soul had departed. To make a feast of gluttony and drunkenness over Christ’s body and blood must be more than revolting ; it must be fearfully depraving to human souls and insulting to our dying Redeemer.

V. 30, refers to judgments already brought upon some in that church. Some were chastened with sickness and infirmity ; some had slept in death. There could be no safety against these fearful inflictions except by judging themselves in the sense of that conscious, close, searching self-examination which Paul had enjoined. Neglecting this, they must expect sore chastisement, for God would certainly seek to save them from everlasting damnation.

33. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home ; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

These concluding words touch briefly upon the scandalous manners and ways of that church in its observance of the Supper and its antecedent Love-feast.

We look with amazement at those flagrant abuses, and can by no means account for them except as we recal the idol festivals of corrupt, lascivious Corinth, where such proceedings were common and sufficiently congenial to the selfishness and sensuality of heathenism.—Manifestly the gospel had yet a mighty work to do in even the church at Corinth.

CHAPTER XII.

SPIRITUAL gifts in the primitive church are the leading theme in chaps. 12–14 :—treated first in chap. 12, as to their general character and objects, making prominent the fact of *unity amid diversity*—their one purpose, yet under extremely various manifestations and forms.

Chap. 13, is really an episode on the supremacy of love—its surpassing excellence, towering high above all these spiritual gifts, and even above any and all other graces of the christian character.

Chap. 14, resumes the discussion of spiritual gifts to show that those among them should be esteemed most which bear most directly upon christian edification. Chap. 12, aims particularly to show that all these gifts come from the same divine Spirit ; are distributed with very great diversity in their character and special purpose, yet always bearing upon the same high ends—the edification of the church, Christ's body.—The illustration which runs through most of the chapter is drawn from the human body in which are many several members, exceedingly diverse in their functions, yet all ministering each in its sphere to the purposes of the whole body.

That this discussion appears in a letter to Corinth rather than in any other of Paul's epistles is probably due to the high intellectual culture of that city ; to the city pride in that culture and to the consequent ambition for those gifts which were in highest repute there. These circumstances made these gifts a spiritual snare to the church in the line of temptation to unhallowed ambition. Hence the occasion for presenting and enforcing the points made in this chapter.

1. Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

“I would not have you ignorant” should have been made stronger ;—I am *not willing* ye should remain ignorant. In v. 2, read—not “ye know that ye were Gentiles”—which scarcely needed to be said ; but—“ye know that

when ye were Gentiles, ye were borne away toward (or unto) those voiceless idols, as ye might chance to be led. They were “voiceless” in broad distinction from the many-voiced Spirit of God. They had neither truth to speak nor the power to say it if they had had it to say. But God, the eternal Fountain of all knowledge, had given his Spirit to utter in expressive forms this very knowledge, as his intelligent creatures might need.

3. Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Here the underlying truth is that the divine Spirit is officially the Revealer of Christ. This comprehensively is his function—his high mission. Consequently his inward, truth-speaking suggestions never move men to call Jesus anathema; nor can any man say from his heart that Jesus is Lord [Messiah] but by the Holy Ghost. Not only does the Spirit witness to men that Jesus is the Lord, but they never accept this truth in its full significance, otherwise than through his inspirations.

This allusion to calling Jesus anathema is (supposably) due to the fact that unbelieving Jews were wont to pronounce this fearful word of theirs over his name. Of course they did this, not speaking by the Holy Ghost but as remote from all sympathy with Him as is possible.

This verse (be it noted) gives the key-note of the chapter—*viz.*, that the Spirit *witnesses for Christ*; has it for his mission to teach the things of Christ and by this means edify the church in the knowledge and love of his name.

4. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Paul used his word for “diversities” (*dairesēis*) in v. 5 as well as vs. 4–6: and our translators should have followed him and have said “diversities” in each verse if in either. —The noticeable thing in the whole passage is that those

diversities (1) are *ascribed* to the same Spirit as present and manifested in them all : (2) are thought of as *administered*—sent forth and directed—by the same Lord Jesus ; and (3) as *energized*, worked, imbued with their vital force, by the same God, working all things in and through all these agencies. It is one case among several in which Paul recognizes a Trinity of distinct divine forces and agencies, all concurring to the same ultimate ends. Here he begins with the Spirit—the Holy Ghost ; next, adduces the Lord Jesus ; and last, God. The same Spirit is present in all these gifts ; the same Lord administers them all : the same God provides the working energy in all.—It cannot, I think, be questioned that Paul distinctly recognizes a Trinity in the one God and purposely honors that Trinity. He saw in these gifts the fact of a three-fold manifestation of the one God—a manifestation which involved more than merely three diverse modes of exhibiting divine activity ; a something more which we cannot name or define better than by calling it a modified *personality*.

7. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ;

9. To another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ;

10. To another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another *divers* kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues.

11. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

However great the diversity of these gifts, their only purpose is spiritual profit.—This passage enumerates these various gifts, and gives to each its distinctive name.—Of the precise distinction between “wisdom” and “knowledge” we cannot be entirely sure, for it may not have been the very same which is now made between these words. These special gifts passed away long since, leaving no defining history to draw the line precisely between one and another. The early Christian Fathers felt the same diffi-

culty that we feel as to this accurate definition and distinction ; for even in their day, these manifestations were long past and had left no perfect history of their working.—Paul's special point here is that the same Spirit was the author of all these gifts and distributed them to each man at his pleasure.

In v. 9. “faith” must refer to the miracle-working power, and not specially to the acceptance of Christ for personal salvation.—What distinction obtains between “faith” as used here, and the working of miracles (v. 10.) it were vain to presume. As has been several times suggested, “prophecy” had a broader sense than merely predicting future events.

12. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body: so also is Christ.

13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Here Paul introduces the figure which leads the thought throughout the rest of the chapter—the human body with its many distinct members, representing the church, considered as the body of Christ, in which church are many different individual members, each having his special function and gift.—The last clause of v. 12 means—So also is the body of Christ, *i. e.* the church. That this is Paul’s thought is made clear in v. 27—“Ye are the body of Christ.” Indeed it lies at the foundation of this figure. By one and the same Spirit we are all baptized into the one body of Christ, pledged to his love and service, and thus consecrated to the one supreme purpose of living for him as his people.—All alike, whether we may be Jew or Greek, bond or free,—In the last clause the word “into” is superfluous, damaging rather than aiding the sense. It is omitted in the best textual authorities,—We have all been made to drink one Spirit—the Spirit being here under the Old Testament symbol of “water.” We do not drink *into* the same water : we drink the same water.

14. For the body is not one member, but many.

15. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body ; is it therefore not of the body ?

16. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body ; it is therefore not of body ?

17. If the whole body *were* an eye where *were* the hearing ? if the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling ?

18. But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

The body is not one solid member like a block of marble, but is composed of many members, each having its own function to fulfil.—To make his practical point quite clear Paul makes suppositions. Suppose the foot—one of the least prominent and active members—should say—Because I am not hand, I am not of the body ; I should not be missed ; nobody cares much for me ; I will just retire and be out of the way.—In the last clause of v. 15 and also in v. 16, the best text is not interrogative, but declarative—thus : “ If the foot shall say—Because I am not hand I am not of the body, it is not, for this, out of the body : ”—this little outburst of wounded pride has not severed the foot from the body. The original has no indication of a question.

Each organ has its use ; and this not so much for itself as for the whole body. If the whole body were eye and could do nothing but see, it were a very useless thing. The vast capabilities of the human body would be, where ?—Or if we suppose the present human body with not its five senses, but only one sense—say, of sight, or hearing, taste or smell, —a sad, disabled thing it would be !—As it is, each several organ cannot be the brightest, the most observed, the most flattered ; some one must be at least a little in advance of the others and these others a little behind ;—but jealousy, pride and envy in the less conspicuous organ would be in wretchedly bad taste—would be only a display of insipid folly.

So in the church. Paul would have each church member apply this illustration to his own wounded pride—to his own contemptible envy of his more celebrated and honored brother. There will be some humble gifts alongside of others more brilliant and honored ; let not the humble make a display of their jealousy or envy ; but faithfully

and thankfully fulfil each his appropriate function. This Paul would teach and exhort.

19. And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20. But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

21. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

For the sake of a stronger and more distinct impression, the same points are put in a slightly different form. I judge that Paul had a keen sense, not of the folly alone, but of the ludicrous, ridiculous nonsense of this sort of mutiny among the various members of the human body. O if his prond, envious church members in Corinth might only see it as it is and see themselves in this mirror of human hearts!

22. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.

23. And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24. For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

25. That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

26. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

The more feeble members are found to be very necessary if once their functions fail. Paley tells of a man who by some casualty lost the muscle that lifts the eye-lashes, and was obliged to raise them with his hand in order to see. He never had appreciated the convenience and value of that small muscle before.

Paul refers to the less comely members which we never put on exhibition, and says of them that we give them a certain extra ornamentation, as if to raise them to the common level of comeliness. So God has compensations which serve to balance up the otherwise lower and humbler parts and bring them more nearly upon a common footing with all the rest. The doctrine in this is that there should never be any schism—any mutiny or even jealousy in the church body; but rather a mutual sympathy, love and care reigning throughout them. Thus if one member suffer, all should sympathize with that suffering member—as happens always to some extent in the human body.

The use of the old word “whether”—now obsolete in the sense given it here—damages the force of this passage. Its meaning is fully expressed thus:—If one member suffer, all suffer with it; if one member be honored, all rejoice with it.—Thus (v. 27) ye are the body of Christ and members of it severally (better than “in particular”)—each of you severally in his sphere, ye are members of that one body.

28. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29. *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?*

30. Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31. But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

The authorized version—“God hath set *some* in the church,” is very infelicitous—especially in this use of “some.” What Paul said was this: “*Whom* God hath set [located] in the church,” this “whom” referring to all the various members spoken of in the preceding verses. All these members of Christ’s body with their various functions God hath placed in his church;—first, Apostles; second, prophets, *etc.* They are not all apostles; are not all prophets; but some have one function and some another.—We may assume that Paul has made up a somewhat complete list of the more prominent classes having

special gifts.—A similar but briefer list appears in Eph. 4; 11.

Perhaps the most important thing to notice here, bearing upon the interpretation is that this is not so much a list of office-bearers as of gift-holders—those who had the special endowments conferred by the diverse ministrations of the Spirit. Under this view of the case, we may dismiss the discussion of the question as to the grades of office indicated here.

In v. 31, the first verb, “covet,” may, as to grammatical form, be either indicative or imperative;—either *ye are* very covetous of best gifts; or I *exhort* you to be so—covet *ye* all best gifts. Our auth. vers. takes the latter alternative; but manifestly the former is right—as is shown by the last clause—“And yet I show you a way far more excellent.”—Suppose we read—I exhort you to covet the best gifts, *yet I can give you much better advice than that, and I will now proceed to do so.*—This is far from being pertinent.—But if we read, [I regret to see that] *ye are covetous of the most shining gifts; yet I can show you a far more excellent way [and will proceed to do so], we obtain a sense every way pertinent.*

Yet again; The real meaning of the passage must turn very much upon the sense of the word translated “best.” If “best” were the true text, then in Paul’s sense of “best” gifts, he might exhort them to seek those gifts earnestly: while in *their* sense of the word he could not exhort thus. The true text therefore becomes specially important. The best authorities give it—not the best [kreittona] but the greater [meizona]—which must doubtless mean the more prominent, the more distinguished, *i. e.* in *their* esteem. This shows that the construction must be indicative—*ye do*—and not imperative—*do ye*.



CHAPTER XIII.

THIS entire chapter is an episode, a digression from the theme begun in chap 12; taken up and finished in chapter 14. It is a special essay on *love*. It is Paul’s ful-

fillment of his promise (11: 31) to show “the more excellent way” than that of coveting the grandest gifts in the whole range of the charismata of the primitive church. This promise he does indeed most admirably fulfil.

This wonderful chapter has a well digested method. Vs. 1–3 compare love with other most valued things and declare that those without this are nothing.—Vs. 4–7 tell us what love does and what it does not; for no better test of its value can be had than to put it to the proof and try it by its capabilities and by its actual performances.—Then in v. 8 he dwells on its surpassing endurance;—its perpetuity—outlasting all the other most valuable acquisitions of mortals;—closing finally by placing it in comparison—not with any of the spiritual gifts of those times, but with the graces of christian character, compared with which it is shown to eclipse them all.

Preliminary to the intelligent study of this chapter, we must give special attention to the word “charity”—a word which must be responsible for obscuring to many minds the significance and beauty of this whole passage.

Charity, here, is not beneficence—giving alms to the poor—this sense of the word being by no means broad enough to answer its description; besides that Paul supposes himself to give all his goods to feed the poor and yet have no charity.

Again, this “charity” is not a favorable judgment of others’ character or conduct—the opposite of suspicion, jealousy, severe judgment on others; for this sense of the word is entirely too narrow to meet this description of charity.

But positively, “charity” here is nothing more or less than love—real *love*—good will to men. It translates the Greek word [agapae]—a word which our New Testament translates “love” in an immense majority of cases;—always when used by Christ or by John; in very many cases when used by Paul; yet throughout this chapter and in eighteen other passages, they translate it “charity;” while they translate it love in not less than fifty cases.—How to account for this diversity and for this use of the word charity, is not quite clear. It is supposable that in their time the word had some shades of meaning now obsolete, so that it better represented the idea of love then than now; also that the translation of Paul’s epistles was

made by one set of men and the gospels and epistles of John by another set ; or we must put it to the account of mere caprice—the latter scarcely probable. Be the explanation what it may, the word *love* should certainly supersede “*charity*,” especially so in this chapter.

1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

2. And though I have *the gift of propheey*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Speaking with tongues comes first to Paul’s thought because this gift had been esteemed above all the rest in the group by the people of cultured Corinth. So Paul opens grandly ;—Though I spake all the tongues of earth and heaven—all the languages known to men or to angels ; yet if I have not love, I have become sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal—good for noise and for noise only.—Then passing on to the spiritual gifts next in popular esteem, he supposes himself to have all prophesy and to know all mysteries and all science [Greek], and even to have all faith so as to remove mountains—of course faith as related to the miracle-working power—even then, without love, he says I am nothing. The elements of real value in character are not there.

This measure of the faith of miracles—removing mountains—comes apparently from Christ’s words (Mat. 17: 20 and 21: 21). “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain ; Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ;” or “Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done.”—And next, though I deal out (in morsels, the Greek word puts it) little by little, patiently, toilsomely, all my possessions ; and though with a martyr’s zeal, I yield my body to be burned, yet if I have not love (a case supposable), I am profited in nothing. All this avails me not before God.

4. Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
7. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

These things that love does—these qualities of temper and disposition which it manifests, are readily intelligible.—“Vaunteth not itself”—is not boastful in self-praise, and this because it seeks not self-exaltation but the exaltation of others.—“Is not puffed” with self-conceit, vanity.—“Does not behave itself unseemly”—for the chief temptation to unseemly behavior is the ambition for notoriety; an excessive desire to attract notice and win applause.—“Seeketh not her own”—literally, the *things of itself*. No point in this entire description is more expressive, more philosophical, than this. The difference between the loving spirit and the not loving spirit, manifests itself in this point more precisely than in any other;—the one does not seek its own, and the other does.

“Is not easily provoked” because love is not specially sensitive in defense of its own assumed dignity; is not afraid of being slighted or undervalued.

“Thinketh no evil;” is unsuspicious, inclines to the more favorable construction of doubtful things. It is always more pleasant for love to think well of others than to think ill.—In v. 6 the question of interpretation is whether iniquity and truth are precisely correlated to each other, inasmuch as properly iniquity is said of acts as right or wrong; truth of things in the abstract as corresponding or otherwise with the facts of the case. Iniquity gives the character of a moral agent; truth in its strict usage does not.—But are we bound to assume a close correlation?

“Truth” here most probably refers to the gospel system as the greatest embodiment of truth; and love is said to rejoice in it as being in fullest sympathy with its spirit and joyful in its prosperity. This stands squarely over against iniquity; no antagonism could be sterner or stronger. Love has no joy in iniquity, but all joy in blessed gospel truth.

In v. 7, the first word and the last, “bear” “endure,” have only slight shades of distinction ; the former denoting the quiet bearing of present ills ; the latter, the patient endurance of long protracted suffering. Paul’s usage of this word “bear” may be seen in 1 Cor. 9 : 12, and 1 Thess. 3 : 1, 5. In saying—“Believeth all things,” Paul would not teach that love is foolishly credulous, but only that it is trustful ; has no heart-antagonisms against truth, of the sort which makes it congenial to a selfish soul to disbelieve and reject the truth.—“Hopeth all things,” in the sense apparently of being hopeful for the best, charitably putting the best construction upon what may be yet doubtful.—A sweet spirit throughout. One cannot read these few graphic touches without a sense that this spirit of love is of heaven, not of earth ; of God, not of Satan ; is wrought in depraved human souls by the truth and Spirit of God, and never otherwise.

8. Charity never faileth : but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail ; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease ; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11. When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

11. For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these *is* charity.

Love is not short-lived—has no transient mission : can never *fail* in the sense of closing its function ; finishing its work ; ceasing to live and to bless. On the contrary love is the very thing that must endure forever, growing only the more pure, bright, glorious as the eternal ages roll on.

Measure it by comparison with other best earthly things ; —*e. g.* with prophecies—they shall be abolished : with tongues ;—these special gifts shall cease ; with knowledge [science in the Greek sense]—this too shall be abolished. Paul uses the same verb for the disappearance of “know-

ledge," as for the disappearance of prophecy—in both cases to signify that these are thought of here as transient gifts of the primitive age. That is to say, the knowledge here thought of is not knowing in its intrinsic sense—is not the knowing to which Paul refers in v. 12—"Then shall I know even as also I am known."—In v. 8 we have the old word "whether" in a sense mostly obsolete, Paul's meaning being this:—If we have prophecy. . . if we have tongues . . . if knowledge *etc.*—each and all of these are transient. In v. 9. we must not be misled into the notion that one part is knowledge and another part prophecy, Paul's meaning being this—that our knowledge is imperfect, and so also our prophecy. The "in part" is contrasted with "that which is perfect," as in v. 10. The things that are imperfect are present, now; the things that are perfect are yet to come when the things that are necessarily imperfect shall have passed away.—Compare with this the changes in the human development from childhood to manhood. Childhood has its own speech, understanding, thought; its own tastes, amusements, fancies, pursuits:—which manhood puts away and comes into a new sphere of avocations, aspirations, joys, life.

Yet another illustration. We see now as in a mirror, which we seem to see "*through*" because the object appears to lie back of its surface; and we see but dimly as when truth seems to lie in enigma, wrapped in darkness; but then we shall see "face to face," even as when one face looks squarely into another with no interposing veil between.—Now my knowing is very imperfect; but then I shall know clearly even as I am known perfectly. These verbs are both intensive.

But what shall we say of this comparison—"I shall know as I am known"—I shall be known by others perfectly and I shall myself know other beings with the same perfect knowledge? Does he assume that in that heavenly state, all thought, all mind, all character, will be *transparent*, having no possible concealments, but open to the perfect vision and perfect knowledge of all? It goes far to favor this that perfect purity needs no concealments—has never the least occasion to hide a thought or an emotion; and also, that a sense of the blessedness of all the holy in heaven must be immensely heightened by such knowing of others even as also we are known by them.

The powers and possibilities of “the spiritual body”—who can know at our present stand-point of vision? But Paul had been “caught up into paradise”—besides that inspiration may have given him more knowledge of the laws and modes of that world than uninspired men have ever seen or known.

Here we have these three christian graces, abiding through our present sphere of existence—all charming and precious—faith, hope, love; but of these, the greatest, purest, best, is love.



CHAPTER XIV.

PAUL resumes the general subject discussed in chap. 12, *viz.*, the exercise of the extraordinary spiritual gifts of the primitive age, especially as related to the edification of the church and to the order and method of proceeding in their church assemblies. He gives special attention to the bearing of these gifts upon edification, applying to the subject the great doctrine of the law of love, as developed in chap. 13. That chapter, we shall see prepares for this; unfolds the principles that should govern in this.—In cultured Corinth, the gift of tongues attracted undue attention and commanded extravagant admiration. Of course the temptation was very great to over-estimate its value and to make a display of it, to the neglect of prophecy—which had far more vital bearings upon christian instruction and edification. Consequently Paul devotes this chapter almost exclusively to setting this matter right in their esteem, reversing the Corinthian estimate, and putting in its stead an estimate which christian love makes and sustains.

1. Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2. For he that speaketh in an *unknown tongue* speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to edification, and exhortation, and eomfort.*

4. He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself ; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied : for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Appropriately Paul begins with exhorting them to cultivate christian love which he had set forth so beautifully and forcibly in chap. 13 ; and then adds—also be ye zealous for spiritual gifts—placing prophecy at the head of them all.—*For*, it is a great mistake to put tongues first in your esteem, because if ye speak in a language which no man understands, ye speak to God only. Ye may say very profound things, but all would be of no use to man. On the contrary, prophesying is unto men (not to God only), and to men for their edification—which should be your object. Speaking with tongues a man may edify himself, provided he understands what he is saying—which seems to be assumed. Prophesying edifies the church, for this was in their vernacular tongue.—In v. 5, Paul seems to assume that speaking with tongues was not only a popular but an agreeable and perhaps personally useful gift ; but still he places prophecy above it for its greater public utility, unless the speaker with tongues himself interprets his otherwise unknown words.

6. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine ?

7. And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped ?

8. For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle ?

9. So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken ? for ye shall speak into the air.

10. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.

11. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.

12. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

If I come to you speaking with ever so many unknown tongues, what does it all avail toward profit unless I give you some knowledge, some ideas unknown to you before? So of musical instruments, if their sounds are made at random with no regard to harmony, what is the use? The trumpet must give the well known war-blast, or no man will feel himself summoned to arm for the fight. Thus your spoken words must be understood, or ye only speak into the air, throwing your words away—a proverbial expression.—These words and their sounds may have a recognized meaning some where in the world; there may be people on the face of the earth who are accustomed to those words and sounds and who take in the thought they represent; but if the people who sit in your church and hear you, know them not, you will be only as a barbarian to them and they to you. It is only as if some barbarian (of Gaul or Parthia) were to come into your church to talk to you in his unknown tongue.—Therefore, let your zeal for spiritual gifts be directed to the edification of the church.

13. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.

14. For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16. Else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17. For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

From this passage it appears that prayer and song as well as preaching and exhortation, were sometimes in a foreign, unknown tongue. Of course the same principles applied in these exercises as in speaking. If the people could not understand the prayer or the song, they could not participate in the exercise to any profit. Praying in a foreign tongue might be prayer as to the speaker—not as to the hearer.

18. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all :

19. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

20. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

Paul would bring his own example and his own aspirations to bear upon the ambitious Corinthians. In these gifts he surpassed them all; but, the profit of others had been and should be his supreme purpose.—Brethren, use the common sense God has given you. Do not perpetrate the folly, to which ye are tempted, of making a vain display of these gifts, for purposes of display only. So doing, ye would be mere children as to understanding and good sense. I would have you children only in the point of malice. In this point, the simplicity and guilelessness of the child-nature are admirable; but in matters of genuine understanding, be ye men.

21. In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

A new argument is drawn from the Old Testament:—here called “the law,” though the passage is Isa. (28 : 11) where God’s speaking to his people in a foreign tongue supposes them to be captives in a foreign land where they

would hear the jargon of a tongue all strange to their ear. This jargon of a foreign tongue is thought of as God's voice of rebuke in the form of the national affliction of a sore captivity ; yet even this, the disobedient people would not hear. So God speaking in a foreign tongue became significant of their unbelieving obduracy ; a sign, not of their faith, but of their unbelief ; and in its suggestive force did not specially recommend the use of a foreign tongue.

23. If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad ?

24. But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all :

25. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest ; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Ye have yet another test of the relative value of tongues and of propheey in their influence respectively upon a heathen, an unbeliever who may drop into your religious meetings. If he should hear you all speaking in strange tongues, will he not say ye are mad, have lost your reason ? But if ye are prophesying, using a language he understands and speaking the truth impressively with the spiritual earnestness and power which characterize the gift of prophesying, then he is convicted of sin ; the secret things of his heart are brought to his view ; he says “God is in this place ;” and “this is his voice to my soul.”—Such results show the immense superiority of prophesying over speaking with tongues.

26. How is it then, brethren ? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

An abundance, not to say super-abundance of spiritual gifts, with perhaps some degree of unhallowed passion for display, created a necessity for regulation and even restraint. In their religious meetings every one had something to

bring forward : let them take care that all be for the general edification.

27. If any man speak in an *unknown tongue*, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course ; and let one interpret.

28. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church ; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

29. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

30. If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

31. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33. For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

There was special danger lest speaking with tongues should be overdone. Therefore let not more than two or at the most three speak in this way, and let these speak, not simultaneously, but in succession ; and let some one interpret,—of course this interpreting would require that only one should be speaking at the same time. If there were no one to interpret, let there be no speaking publicly in a strange tongue ; let the brother speak within himself and to God.—Under a similar rule and for the same general purpose, let not more than two or three prophesy, and this in succession, and the others [plural : *all* the rest] hear and judge ; form their opinion and make the just discriminations. If a fresh revelation should be made to any brother sitting and hearing, let the speaker desist and give opportunity for this fresh revelation to be brought forward. Thus all whom the Spirit might impress would have opportunity to speak so that all might be instructed and might receive the exhortation [better than “*be comforted*”].

A fact of great importance to the good order of their Christian assemblies is this (v. 32)—that the prophets have the power of self-control ; their spiritual utterances are subject to their own discretion. They must not plead that the suggestions or impulses of the Divine Spirit in their

hearts are beyond their control and therefore they absolutely *must* speak. These impulses are not above good rules and the legitimate demands of the general edification. God is never responsible for confusion in church assemblies, but works by his Spirit unto peace.

This principle applies in all ages, certainly not less to day in the absence of extraordinary spiritual gifts, than in Corinth when and where those gifts were specially abundant.

34. Let your women keep silence in the churches : for it is not permitted unto them to speak ; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home : for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Tischendorf locates the clause—"As in all the churches of the saints"—At the beginning of v. 34 and not at the end of v. 33. This would indicate that the rules in regard to women were prevalent in all the churches—a point in regard to which there can be no reasonable doubt. Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 2: 11-14) holds the same doctrine ; gives his own opinion very explicitly ; and sustains it there more fully than here by arguments drawn from the creation and the fall.—The reference to "the law" as enjoining upon women a state "under obedience" is apparently to Gen. 3 : 16 ; "And he shall rule over thee." Paul evidently regards this state as incompatible with woman's public speaking in their church assemblies. If this were all that he said in this connection, his restriction upon woman's speaking might be understood to be limited to such speaking as involved some exercise of authority.—But he proceeds to say—"If they will learn any thing let them ask their own husbands at home"—which was manifestly designed to preclude them from asking questions in the public meeting.—Moreover, the reason assigned—"For it is a shame for women to speak in the church," rests the case upon the general doctrine of propriety, and makes no exceptions.

On this passage, the first business of the interpreter is to develop the sense of Paul's words as *written to the church at Corinth*—to answer the question—What did he mean to say *to them* ; what rules did he lay down *for them*?—As to

this I judge there can be no reasonable doubt. He meant to forbid women to speak in their public assemblies, even to the extent of asking questions.

But a further question arises ;—*viz.* : Is this a rule of universal application, to be applied in all ages, under all the varying circumstances of culture, intelligence, piety ? Or may it be relaxed in stringency and adjusted to the culture, intelligence, and piety of women, under the yet more comprehensive law, so constantly put in this chapter —*All things for edification?*

Two historic facts deserve consideration here—*viz.* :

1. That in the Corinthian church assemblies, the tendencies to disorder were exceedingly great. This fact stands out strongly throughout this chapter.—It may safely be assumed that these tendencies would have been greatly aggravated if women had been allowed and accustomed to speak equally with men.

2. The social state of woman in Corinth was unquestionably very low. I speak now of her social state as determined by her general intelligence, refinement, culture, and consequently her moral force in society.—For ages Corinth had been notoriously dissolute in morals—in forms of dissoluteness which fell with crushing power upon woman. The proud intellectual culture of Corinth to which history does pay some respect, seems to have left woman out. I take it to be historically certain that woman stood on a much lower plane in Corinth than in Judea, idolatry and its vices having debased her in Corinth, while even the Jewish religion and much more the Christian, had elevated her in Judea. Hence the women who come to the surface in the gospel history are among the noblest specimens of womanhood, and, be it noted, their testimony to the circumstances and to the fact of Christ's resurrection, is put on record with the assumption of its full equality with that of the other sex.

But that testimony, from the Mary's, and from the other women, Paul prudently refrains from adducing in this letter to Corinth. In Chapter 15 (as we shall see), he gives a remarkably complete resume of the witnesses to that great fact, more exhaustive than we meet with anywhere else in the New Testament—all but the testimony of the women. To that he makes not the slightest allusion. This remarkable omission must have had a reason.

None can be given save this : that in Corinth their testimony would have been of little or no account.

These historic facts then in regard to woman's social and moral status in Corinth are before us for consideration in regard to their possible bearings upon the application of Paul's rule in our own times.

The question of woman's eligibility to the gospel ministry may be dismissed in the outset. On general principles, that question should be considered settled. With much good material at his command, our Lord placed no woman in the body of the chosen twelve ; and none apparently among the seventy. But they were present in that wonderful prayer-meeting, which continued down to the great Pentecost, and again, in that of Acts 12, to which Peter introduced himself. Our most practical question is whether her voice in the prayer-meeting, which is virtually “the home circle” of the church, shall be forbidden or free :—put under absolute restriction, or left under the broader principle—*All things for edification.*

36. What! came the word of God out from you ? or came it into you only ?

37. If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

40. Let all things be done decently and in order.

The self-conceit of the church at Corinth calls for yet another rebuke.—Would ye assume (says Paul) that yours is the mother church of the Christian world ? Did the gospel go forth at first from your own city and from yourselves ? Have ye not the least respect for churches much older than yours, of riper experience and more abundantly instructed in the faith and order of the gospel ?

If any man among you assumes to have pre-eminent wisdom and spirituality, let him consider my credentials, and let him acknowledge my superior authority. If he will ignore all this, I give him over to ignorance.

Finally, brethren, let prophesy stand first in your choice and highest in your aspirations. As to the gift of tongues,

let it live among you without prohibition—which, compared with their previous estimate, was very cool commendation.



CHAPTER XV.

This chapter treats but one subject—the *resurrection*; first proved in the standard case—the resurrection of Christ—from the Scriptures and from the testimony of witnesses; then discussed in its fundamental relations to the gospel scheme and to the sacrifices and perils of the Christian life; lastly, defended against objections to it as naturally impossible; and the nature of the resurrection body illustrated.

The occasion for this discussion was the denial of any resurrection, put forth by some among the brethren in that church—a too easy concession to the philosophical Greek who scouted the very idea that the dead should rise. We may remember that at Athens (Acts 17: 18) “certain philosophers encountered Paul, saying—He seems to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.” Corinth in these points was a second Athens.

1. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures;

Appropriately Paul begins by recalling to their attention the doctrine he had preached to them in the founding of their church—their faith in which had made them gos-

pel Christians, unless their faith should prove to be baseless—the things they had believed being found false.—Two points were thoroughly fundamental; *viz.*: (a) That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures:—(b) That after his burial he rose again on the third day, and this according to the Scriptures.—Placing these two staple facts side by side tacitly assumed that they were both (perhaps equally) fundamental.

5. And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

The fact of Christ's resurrection was of a sort to be proved by credible witnesses. Their credibility would depend on their being able to recognize his person, and then upon their being of sound mind and truthful in character. These witnesses were from his most intimate friends, who had known him longest and best. Of their personal integrity and veracity, no doubt worthy of regard has ever been raised. That they were not enthusiasts, bound to make out a strong case, is put as thoroughly outside the pale of possibility as well can be. For though Jesus had more than once foretold to them his resurrection, they had either failed to understand him, or they thought it too improbable to be believed. They did not expect it, and were justly upbraided by Jesus for their unbelief.—Then the very great variety of circumstances under which these personal appearances took place;—in several cases, to one alone; then to two; then to the eleven; and finally, to more than five hundred at one time; sometimes during the day; again, in the evening; once at the table, made known to them in the breaking of bread:—in general, amid circumstances best adapted to revive the impressions of scenes before his death, and ensure the most certain recognition possible.—All this variety of circumstances, most of them specially favorable for identifying his person, con-

spire to make out the most perfect testimony which a case of resurrection can admit. There is little occasion, however, to enlarge upon this, the testimony is so strong, and in its circumstances so entirely above suspicion.—Paul makes a special point of the fact that the greater part of the five hundred who saw him at one time were then still living.

As usual Paul gives to Peter his Aramean name Cephas. Jesus showed himself to him individually (Luke 24: 34) for reasons of tenderness and love (we must suppose), to reassure him of forgiveness for his great sin. The special appearance to James had also its peculiar reasons—easily understood if we suppose this James to have been one of his lineal brethren who are referred to (John. 7: 5) as not then believing on him ; who were passed by and the preference given to “the disciple whom Jesus loved” at the critical moment when Jesus had occasion to commend his mother to some faithful friend for her son (John 19: 26, 27). This appearance of the risen Jesus to him was apparently the eventful moment of his life, for he appears very shortly after (Acts 1: 14) among the praying group. This great transformation was due, we may suppose, to the wisdom and the love manifested in this special appearance to a lineal brother, never won to faith and penitence before.—Of the appearance to more than five hundred, this is our only historic notice. Undoubtedly it was in Galilee whither Jesus had directed his disciples to repair from Jerusalem—that being the region where his converts were most numerous and where the greatest number could be convened who could testify to his resurrection from their previous personal knowledge of him.

Last of all, he appeared to Paul ; but this was long after his ascension.—“One born out of due time” means not after but before the due time—a premature birth—suggestive here of Paul’s low thought of himself.

9. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10. But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain ; but I labored more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Whatever brings up to Paul's thought his persecuting life, reveals the grief, the shame, the humiliation of his soul in the recollection. In view of it he feels himself the least of all the apostles and all unworthy of that honored name.

But that which humbled him so deeply, set forth most gloriously the riches of God's grace. To that grace he owed all he was—all his faith, all his love, all his zeal for Christ, all his labors, and all their usefulness.—His words—“more abundantly than they all”—may perhaps mean only—more abundantly than any one among them all. This on the face of it is more probable than that he should compare his labors with the sum total of all theirs.

11. Therefore whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

12. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14. And if Christ is not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

26. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17. And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.

All alike, I and they, have preached the resurrection of Christ, and ye have believed it. But if this be so, how do ye, (some of you) say there is no resurrection of the dead? —For the doctrine—no resurrection—denies the resurrection of Christ, and this makes our preaching false, and your faith a vain thing—*i.e.* faith in a falsehood. Yea, and all we apostles are proved to be false witnesses as to God, because we have solemnly testified in respect to God that He had raised Christ from the dead;—which he certainly had not done if really the dead never rise.*

* “The clause—“We have testified of God” [Gr. *kata Theon*]; some critics translate—*against God*; others, in respect to God. The latter I prefer. The connection requires nothing more than that they testified to God's raising up his Son.

Paul labors to make the case clear and strong by repetition, reiterating the point that if Christ had not risen, all their faith in him was vain and they were yet in their sins unpardonable. For the resurrection of Jesus was the strongest point, the main point, of God's endorsement of him as his Son. If this failed, not only did the divine veracity fail but the evidence that Jesus came from God failed, and there was no risen Christ, exalted in heaven to give repentance to Israel and remission of sin. The whole gospel scheme was made null and void at its most vital point.

18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20. But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the first-fruits of them that slept.

The points made here have force more because they appeal to Christian sympathy than because they heighten the real argument.—The christians of Corinth had seen their brethren die in conscious fellowship with Christ and had laid them down to rest in Christian graves, as they supposed ;—but, alas ! if there be no resurrection, they had perished hopelessly and forever ! And as for us all—if our hope in Christ reach not onward beyond this life, we are of all men to be pitied most. Think how much we suffer here for being followers of Christ ! Is all this for nothing beyond ?—But Christ *is* risen from the dead—the first fruits of all that sleep in him—they being sure to follow him in the resurrection.

21. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits ; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

By one man Adam, death came into the world ; so also by one man, Jesus Christ, shall come the resurrection of the righteous dead.—Paul's course of thought here does not include the resurrection of the wicked ; does not require the least allusion to them, or any expression of his

views on the question of *their* resurrection. He is thinking of Christ's personal resurrection as guaranteeing the resurrection of his own people. This is shown conclusively, both in the previous context (v. 20)—Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that have slept in him; and also in the following context,—“Afterward, they that are Christ's at his coming.”—Therefore, the attempt to force v. 22 into service to prove that *all mankind* will be made *alive in Christ* to their eternal salvation, is utterly indefensible—a flagrant, violent distortion of plain words, wresting them from their intent, and putting a sense upon them which the writer manifestly never thought of.

24. Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.

25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted which did not put all things under him.

28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

This passage has acknowledged difficulties.—The points to be carefully considered are—“The *end*,” of what? Delivered up *what* “kingdom?” and in what sense does the Saviour himself “become subject to the Father?”

The key to the sense of the passage turn specially upon its conception of Christ's reign over earth and hell, and to a certain extent, over heaven also, *as Redeemer of lost men, and Mediator for his people*. It conceives of supreme control over all things that stand in any relation to this work, as put into his hands for the achievement of the great ends of redemption for his people. The sweep of this dominion includes all the providential agencies of our world; a dominion over mortality and death to which there is special reference here; a power higher than Satan's; and finally, a dominion which includes the ser-

vice of the holy angels. Opposing forces are placed within his sway to be put down until all enemies are beneath his feet. Subsidiary forces are under his direction for use towards the ends of his reign.—Such is the “kingdom” of which this passage speaks, committed by the Father to the Son for the great purposes of redemption in our world. It is brought to view here because of its close relation to the resurrection. In and by means of the resurrection, death, Christ’s last enemy, is abolished. As to his redeemed people, there is no more death, not even mortality.

In vs. 27, 28, Paul sustains his main doctrine—all things placed under the dominion of the Son—by appeal to Scripture, *i.e.* to Ps. 110: 1, and 8: 6;—the former most obviously Messianic, the words of the Father to the Son: the latter less obviously so, yet clearly embracing the Son as brought into the human family by his incarnation.—Paul makes a special point of excepting the Father from the sway of this otherwise universal dominion—an exception obviously necessary because this grant of power came from his own hand, and in the nature of the case must make an exception of the Giver—the very source of all this power.

When this mediatorial work shall have been accomplished, the redeemed all brought home to their everlasting mansions, Satan and all his sway put down beneath the Great Conqueror’s feet, mortality and death as to his people abolished forever—what then? Especially, what shall then ensue in respect to this special grant of power and dominion for the purposes of this Mediatorial kingdom?

The doctrine of this passage seems to me to be this—that *in so so far as pertains to this special work*—it having been finally accomplished, the Great Agent, the Mediatorial King, returns his commission to the Supreme Power from whom it came. Having surrendered this commission, he takes a position of comparative subordination [rather than proper “subjection”] to that Supreme One, the Infinite Father, who is all in all. The power lodged in his hands as Mediatorial King is thenceforward less prominent before the intelligent universe than it had been while this work was in progress. The Father was in no respect less than supreme during the active exercise of this Mediatorial dominion; nor is He more than Supreme after its termi-

nation ; but as manifested before the intelligent universe, the supreme sway of the Father was less in the foreground during the Son's active agency, and comes forward more fully—most fully we may say—after the completion of his work and the visible surrender of his special commission. Of course these great facts must be revealed and put before finite minds with a certain degree of accommodation to finite modes of thought.

The reader should not fail to note that the absolute termination of Christ's mediatorial work carries with it of necessity the end of redemptive work for the lost in perdition. It is simply certain that there can be no more offers of pardon through Christ in that realm of the lost. When Christ shall have delivered back this kingdom to God the Father, the provisions made in and through Christ for pardon and salvation will cease to be operative ; will be promised no more ; will be possible to sinners no longer.

Moreover, the possible application of his redemptive work will be precluded, not only as to sinners of our world who have had their final sentence, but as to supposable fallen beings of other worlds, whether of races already existing or yet to be created. According to Paul, this great scheme of redemption will have fully and finally done its work, never to be resumed again.

29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all ? why are they then baptized for the dead ?

This passage has been interpreted variously, the ablest critics admitting that in our present knowledge of the customs at Corinth, no absolute certainty as to its precise significance can be reached.

The exigencies of the context make it reasonably certain that this being "baptized for the dead" involved special peril ; and moreover peril of a sort for which no compensation could be thought of unless there were a resurrection from the dead. It would be folly to expose one's self to this peril unless the righteous dead were to rise.

In my view the most satisfactory construction is this : —that the dead here thought of are fallen martyrs who met death for Christ's name ; that their death is supposed to result in new converts, either won to the Christian faith by their heroism and patience, or by the fresh inspirations

which their martyrdom breathed into their surviving brethren, intensifying their gospel labors ; and that these fresh converts are thought of as pressing forward like brave soldiers on the battle-field to fill the ranks of their fallen comrades. Thus they are baptized for the dead in the obvious sense of avowing their faith in Jesus in order to fill the place of the fallen—a manifestation of Christian heroism which would have no good reason if the Christian dead were never to rise.—This construction seems to answer well to the usage of these words, and to require us to assume only what is historically probable. Other interpretations—of which there are legion—have seemed to me quite unsatisfactory ; and are therefore omitted.

The verse resumes the argument from v. 23, having no reference to the intervening verses (24–28).—The three oldest manuscripts [S. V. A.] concur in making the last clause—“baptized for them” rather than “baptized for the dead”—the sense, however, being the same in either case.

30. And why stand we in jeopardy every hour ?

31. I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

32. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not ? let us eat and drink ; for to morrow we die.

33. Be not deceived : evil communications corrupt good manners.

34. Awake to righteousness, and sin not ; for some have not the knowledge of God : I speak *this* to your shame.

And why do we [Apostles] stand in jeopardy of our lives every hour ?—a case obviously analogous to that of men baptized for the dead.—In v. 31, “Your rejoicing” is the rejoicing I have in you—as Paul himself explains—“which I have in Christ”—*i. e.*, in reference to you.—The better textual authorities insert the word “brethren :”—“by the rejoicing, brethren, which I have.” The point of this solemn affirmation is—that my perils amount to a daily death, with no security for my life—in daily peril of being stricken down by mob violence. What would life be to me if there were no resurrection ?—If (humanly

speaking) I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus—with men savage as tigers—a reference possibly to that terrific mob which Luke has described (Acts 19). If there be no resurrection, why shall we not say, in words taken from Isaiah's description of the sensualists of his day (22 ; 13)—“Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.”—The words of v. 33 are supposed to be borrowed from the Greek poet Menander, apparently proverbial—used by Paul with a slight modification of the sense to his purposes. Menander meant—associations with bad men vitiate morals and deprave character: Paul, that bad doctrine, like this denial of the resurrection, would deprave their piety. His argument would suggest that such bad doctrine would smite down Christian faith, endurance, self-sacrifice, and put an end to glorious martyrdom for Jesus' name.

“Awake” (v. 34), is not from sleep but from the torpor of intoxication; and do this *righteously*—Paul's word being, like this, an adverb. Their ease was like that of men stupefied with strong drink. And be careful to sin no more—in this way. For some of you have very erroneous notions of God and of his revealed truth, being not merely without the right views, but under the positive power of the wrong—*e. g.* ye deny the resurrection of the body.

35. But some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36. *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

37. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*:

38. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

Here opens a passage of thrilling interest and of supreme importance to the doctrine of the resurrection, its object being to meet the philosophical objection made to this doctrine; to obviate difficulties founded on misconception; and to settle certain very essential points pertaining to the resurrection body and to its relations to the present body.

The cardinal objection here put and met is—How *can* the dead be raised? Their bodies perish; they undergo

decomposition and disappear utterly. With what body then do the dead come back to life again?

“Thou fool”—rebukes the objector for ignoring most obvious analogies;—*e. g.* of grain seed buried in the earth. No such seed is quickened into the new plant unless it first die;—not in this case in the sense that the vital germ dies; but that the matter of the seed planted undergoes decomposition; passes through a chemical change, and so becomes food to be taken up and assimilated for the new plant. The case has been familiar to observing minds ever since the world began. Death works toward and unto new life. The seed buried in earth rises again. Thou sowest not the identical matter which is to be the new plant, certainly not much of it. Thou sowest only a kernel, and God makes of it a living plant—stalk, leaf, and manifold return of the precious grain. “God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him”—according to a uniform method which we are wont to call “a law of nature”—a phrase which means only the way that pleases God.

“To every seed its own body”—gives the vital fact that *God's method preserves identity*—not identity of *matter*, but identity of *kind*, of germs; and in the case of the human body, identity of *person*, so that the body given to me at my resurrection shall be my own body and not another's.

39. All flesh *is* not the same flesh: but *there is* one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds.

40. *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the glory of the terrestrial *is* another.

41. *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differeth from *another* star in glory.

42. So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption:

43. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power:

44. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Another point of surpassing importance is affirmed and richly illustrated here. All flesh is not the same. Flesh may be flesh, and yet one variety of it may be very unlike another. We have illustrations of this everywhere in nature. Men, beasts, fishes, birds, all have flesh, yet each in wide diversity. In the visible heavens above us are many bodies—sun, moon, stars, each very unlike the others in splendor—the difference even between the stars compared with each other being manifestly great. So is the resurrection body compared with the earthly. A body made for the heavenly world must be very unlike the body that is adapted to this earthly state. Weakness, frailty, mortality, give character to the one; incorruption, power, never waning vigor and splendor glorify the other. Both are “body;” both have matter for their base, their substance; both are material as opposed to spiritual, immaterial; and yet the qualities of this resurrection body are in some points so remarkably analogous to the qualities of spirit that Paul describes it by the compound phrase,—“spiritual body.” No other reasonable sense can be found in this phrase except this;—a body having in its nature so much that resembles spirit—so many of the high and noble qualities characterizing spirit, that this word may appropriately be subsidized to express most suggestively the humanly strange and to us yet unknown nature and capabilities of the resurrection body.

The possibilities of an immensely higher glory and power, even in matter which, chemically tested shall have the very same elements, are finely illustrated by comparing a lump of charcoal with an equal weight of diamond—say the weight of the Koh-i-noor. The chemist will prove to us by combustion that these two substances are not only both matter, but both the *very same* matter, both being as nearly pure carbon as is possible for chemistry to find or to produce. Burn them one after another in the same crucible and you get the same results, in essentially the same amounts—so much pure carbon. But think of the difference in glory! The one is black, dull, almost foul; we are wont to think it defiling to the touch. It is far enough from splendor and glory. It reflects back no brilliancy. Men think it a very cheap and dirty thing.

But the Koh-i-noor—how do princes and kings vie with each other to buy it with the wealth of a kingdom; to

wear it as the glory of a royal crown!—In hardness and cutting power, the artist tells us nothing equals it. In durability it defies change while the world shall stand. In splendor and glory, it readily eclipses all the gems of the earth. Perish does it? Rather it is a fit symbol of the body which “sown in corruption is raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor (dull, unlovely charcoal) is raised in glory, resplendent, dazzling, suggestive of our own unfading and beauteous immortality.

Another illustration comes to our hand, good for setting forth not only the same point as above—which is, that matter of the same nature, chemically tested may appear in forms and with qualities inexpressibly more beautiful and perfect; but also this further point—that the more glorious shall be embosomed and concealed in the humbler and be developed out of it.

A very familiar illustration is the caterpillar—in its larva state a crawling and very unattractive object; but, as is well known, there will emerge from this very coarse exterior, a brilliant butterfly, charming the eye with its beauteous colors; surprising us with its powers of motion on the wing and its adaptations to a new sphere of activities. It has dropt off the old encasement; is no longer bound down to earth; but mounts up into a new realm of life and motion in the atmosphere. It has, we may say, forgotten its old life and can never return to it again. It retains no visible traces of its old humble home. It has put off one marked form of the earthly, and put on another, far more splendid. We will not say its new powers are angelic; they are only a visibly manifest advance in that direction; a useful symbol or type, therefore, of the capabilities of this dull, heavy matter of our bodies to take on new forms that shall make us “equal to the angels.”—The special point of this illustration (as said above) is that we know absolutely that the butterfly begins its life in the caterpillar. It was imprisoned there while in its larva state it was crawling slowly on the ground; and yet in due time, under fixed laws of God’s hand in nature, it emerged into its new realm of existence, shining and soaring with capabilities it could never have dreamed of while it lay in that close, dark prison, with not even a prophecy to any mortal eye of the powers which were to be its future inheritance.

45. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

46. Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47. The first man *is* of the earth, earthly : the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

48. As *is* the earthly, such *are* they also that are earthly : and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

49. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

These verses add yet another fact as to the resurrection body ; *viz.* that it shall bear the image of Christ's risen glorious body. It not only owes its own resurrection to the vivifying power of Christ—"a quickening Spirit"—but it is to bear the image of that heavenly body.—This doctrine is elsewhere put in most explicit terms ; *e.g.* (Phil. 3: 21). "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

Higher glory [of body] than this no christian aspirations need ever seek ; better security for it than his promise, it were abusive to ask ; a better illustration of what the resurrection body of the saints will be we have not the least occasion to desire.

These facts and illustrations bring us to the negative conclusion put by Paul (v. 50) :—"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," neither can corruption inherit incorruption. The "flesh and blood" nature is dropped in the grave ; the corruption disappears in the marvellous transfiguration, and only the glory remaineth. But the glory does remain and does blaze out in majesty and splendor all unearthly !

51. Behold, I shew you a mystery ; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

This mystery is not necessarily incomprehensible when once revealed, but is beyond the limits of human knowledge except through revelation: and moreover was a fact not then previously revealed so fully as in this passage.—The word “we” [“we shall not all sleep;” “we shall be changed”] need not be pressed so as to imply that Paul expected this event during his personal life-time.

If he did so expect, he was mistaken; if he so hoped, his hopes were vain. But Paul’s reputation ought to be spared this wound;—at least such a stab ought not to be thrust at him without better reason than this usage of the word “we.” Rather it should be considered a convenient method of distinguishing between those who shall have died before that trumpet-blast, and those who shall be living then. When Paul was writing, the “we” included the writer and his living readers, so that if the final day had broken upon them before they had finished reading this epistle, they would have been the “changed” ones. So whenever the day shall come, the then living generation will be in the class of the “changed.”

It should be noticed that the word “changed,” applies only to those then living, for the dead will have had their “change” before and so be raised “incorruptible.”

54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and the mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

56. The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

57. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

When this stupendous transformation shall have passed over the righteous, there will be a perfect fulfillment of

those words (Isa. 25: 8)—“ Death is swallowed up in victory ; ”—is victoriously conquered ; its long dreaded power utterly and forever broken down, annihilated.—The words of v. 55 are from Hos. 13: 14, with slight variations. The better textual authorities have “ death ” in the second clause as well as the first ;—“ O death, where is thy victory ? O Death, where is thy sting ? ” Doubtless death leads the thought throughout the passage, appearing in both the preceding and the following context.—The strain is one of most exultant triumph over the great terror of our race.—It is however only sin that makes death terrible ; and the great strength of sin has been in the law which men have broken, the knowledge of which brings into human souls the clearest convictions of sin, and also greatly enhances their guilt.—These points are pertinent here because it is in the light of them that we appreciate the worth of salvation through Christ. Through Him we have victory over sin ; and this carries in itself victory over death also. Sin being once subdued and put away, Death has no terror. It becomes a slain foe, over whose fall we sing peans of triumph—as here.

58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

This exhortation has a grand basis in the christian doctrine of the resurrection. With this grand view of our glorious eternal future, we may see most clearly and feel most impressively that honest labor for Christ can never be in vain. Reward is sure, glorious, everlasting !

The discussion of this doctrine of resurrection will be incomplete if passed without some notice of the law of connection between the body that dies and the body that rises. How is this connection secured ? What sort of link binds the one to the other ?

1. The theory that at least some minute germ of the present body will resist dissolution and become the life-germ for the resurrection body, must be abandoned. It may seem to be supported if not even proved by the analogy of the germ of the seed corn ; but analogies are not necessarily perfect. This one may be only approximate.—Understanding by present body, this flesh and blood habiliment

of the soul, this “body” which is tangible to the senses, and appreciable to our physical tests, our science seems to decide most conclusively that nothing of it escapes the universal law of mortality. It all returns to dust.

How, then, is identity preserved? How comes it to pass that, in any proper sense, the resurrection body which I am to have is *my* body, sustaining some positive and real connection with my present material being, such as the idea of resurrection must legitimately involve?

In reply, I can speak only hypothetically, suggesting what seems to me supposable and possible, so far as the subject lies within our present knowledge.

There are two theories, either of which seems to me supposable. Between these our choice must apparently lie.

(a.) The theory that this link of connection is in the human soul alone, and depends on the power of *spirit over matter*. There may reside in spirit the life-germ—the life-power—which assimilates to its purposes the matter requisite to form its physical, material tenement. For aught we can know, this may be the case. The power of spirit over matter we know to be very great. We do not know but it may include this great function—the absolute taking unto and upon itself the body which is to be its abode and to become its organ of communication with other beings and with the material universe. Under this theory there may be profound philosophy as well as sublime poetry in those lines of Montgomery :

“ Hark! the judgment trumpet calls ;
Soul ; rebuild thy house of clay ;—
Immortality thy walls ;—
And Eternity thy day.”

Paul touches this great question only in these words (v. 38) : “ But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed its own body.” Thus Paul begins and ends by resolving the question into the divine pleasure. But God’s pleasure is only another name for a *natural law*. “ Natural law ” is our current phrase for God’s established mode of operation ; or, in yet other words, for his pleasure—for the way of working that pleases him. In the case of the grain-seed, God’s pleasure is that this connecting link which ties the old seed to the new plant with its seed

shall be, to our surface view, a material germ ; but beneath this must lie a life-principle or power which no chemistry of ours can reach. We touch the bottom of our knowledge when we say, God operates that also as it hath pleased him. How perfect the analogy may be between this life-principle in the grain-seed, and some corresponding soul-power in man, who can tell ?

As to this, our theory rests in the assumption of a soul-power over matter which, at the divine word, shall summon to itself the matter requisite to the resurrection body, shaped, constituted and adjusted to this individual soul, so that identity between the resurrection body and this earthly one shall be essentially like that between the same human body at fifty and at ten years of age. This identity, we know, does not lie in its being the same matter. It does lie in its being matter assimilated under the same determining soul [or life] power. It turns, therefore, ultimately on the power of soul [or life] over matter. Hence the soul remaining the same and preserving its personal identity, will assimilate to itself a body which shall have identity with the previous body, because determined, and we may say, *made* by the same soul.

(b.) The alternative theory is that intermediate between the purely spiritual soul of man and his material body of flesh and blood, there is even now a semi-spiritual body, too etherial in nature to be reached by any of our chemical tests—too indestrnctible to be touched by disease, frailty, mortality ; sustaining we know not what relations here in the way of vital connection between the real soul and this mortal body ; but ready to assume palpable relations to the soul at the moment of death, and to supply to it its needful organs of communication with other beings and with the universe when this body of flesh shall have gone to its dust.

On this theory our word descriptive of the state between death and the resurrection—“*disembodied*”—must be qualified so as to deny only this coarse body, and not the supposed etherial one which takes on visible manifest functions as soon as the outer husk drops off.

The reader should understand that this is advanced only as a mere theory, a supposable hypothesis. Our science is quite unable to disprove it, for the appliances which supply to science the facts for its use, will bring back no

report from this supposed semi-spiritual encasement of the soul.

If this supposition be the real fact, then this ethereal body may itself develop into the resurrection body at the last trump. But of the process we can know absolutely nothing, and if the question be—How does the resurrection body itself differ from this body of the intermediate state, and from this germinal, half-developed, semi-spiritual body of the present life, I know not who can tell. To push such questions is to beat about in the total darkness of mystery.

Scripturally considered, Paul has said just one word which seems (it may be only in the *seeming*) to conflict with it, *viz.*, (2 Cor. 5 : 2)—“Clothed upon with our house *which is from heaven.*” This “house” would seem to be the habiliment [clothing] of the soul in the intermediate state. So considered, it is said not to develop itself out of a less manifest but real house already belonging to the soul before death, but to “*be from heaven.*” Apparently, this supposed present semi-spiritual house—a link between pure spirit and gross flesh and blood—was unknown to Paul. His system seems to provide no place for it.

For reasons which these remarks will sufficiently suggest I cannot regard it with favor.

Upon the state intermediate between death and the resurrection, only a dim and feeble light from revelation has fallen. This subject will naturally come up for more full consideration under 2 Cor. 5 : 1–8. Here it is in place for remark, only because of its relation to the resurrection.

The scriptures have spoken with no uncertain voice as to our spiritual relations to Christ, and (as it would seem) to our fellow-saints, and apparently to the holy angels also; —that we “are present with the Lord”; that we shall see him as he is; that we shall be perfectly like him because we shall behold his glory so clearly, so perfectly, so impressively. And as to the society of other kindred spirits—that we are not solitary there; that the society of the holy will fully satisfy the demands of our social nature and of our loving souls.—All these points are made so plain as to leave no ground for doubt.

But when we ask whether the saints in that state have any material organs whatever as instruments of thought or of communication, or of sense; or whether they are simply immaterial spirits, having no relation to matter however

refined—we are painfully ignorant. How pure spirits, utterly apart from any material habiliment, can hold their own in space ; can have a recognized identity ; can have communion of thought and emotion with other spirits similarly unembodied—how very little we can yet know ! —Are spiritual beings dependent on a material organism for their intercommunion with each other ; for their knowledge of the material universe—that is to say, for their intelligent study of God in and through his works ; for their eternal progress in the new sphere of their being ;—of such things we shall know more when we pass beyond the veil that now shuts off those worlds from our view.

One fact in regard to our relations to matter is put beyond question ; *viz.*, that the resurrection body with its untold capabilities will be an advance not only upon our present mode of existence, but upon that of the intermediate state. Inspired men looked away to this resurrection state as the consummation of Christian hope and aspiration.

We cannot read their words without the impression that in God's great scheme there is a place and a use for material organisms as the habiliment of finite souls, to constitute their best possible media of communication with the material universe ; with all the vast and glorious works of God ; and with other beings of kindred intellectual powers and like moral character. The perfection of the spiritual body will be essential (apparently) to the highest perfectibility of our eternal being and blessedness.

In conclusion, I trust the reader will hold it well in mind that the *fact* of the resurrection is in no wise dependent upon the certainty or perfection of any particular theory we may favor as to the laws of its production or the methods of its operation. Let it suffice that God giveth to his saints, each his own body “*As it hath pleased him.*” The divine law of operation under which the one body for me shall be really, and in its proper sense, *identically* my own, it is not vital to my faith in the resurrection that I should know. I can rest in the word of the Lord and in the infinite resources of power which lie back of this revealed truth, pledged to make the promise good.*

* An essay appended to this volume will discuss the question whether the scriptures teach the doctrine of two resurrections, a first and a second ; or of only one, entirely general, of both the righteous and the wicked.

CHAPTER XVI.

Here are miscellaneous concluding topics.

1. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

2. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

3. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

4. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

THIS collection was in behalf of the poor saints of Jerusalem, in which Paul felt a profound interest. It comes to light again in his second epistle to Corinth (8: 4 and 9: 1, 2) : also in his epistle to the Romans (15: 25-28), written somewhat later than this time and at Corinth ; also in Acts 24: 17.—Apart from the intrinsic interest which Paul felt in this collection, out of sympathy with the suffering poor, we may suppose him moved with a noble desire to overcome their prejudice against himself and win them to a better feeling toward Gentile Christians by pouring in upon them the bread they needed in their hunger—benefactions from the very christian brethren whom it had been so hard for them to embrace in warm Christian sympathy and fellowship. Paul taught—“ Love your enemies.” It is worth our while to notice that he practiced it as well.

“ Upon the first day of the week,” let these contributions be gathered in, from each as the Lord may have prospered him. The time named locates their stated periods of christian worship, on the Lord’s day, the christian Sabbath. This example suggests the beautiful propriety of making benefactions—gifts for benevolent purposes—a constant concomitant of worship. To worship God, and to manifest our loving sympathy with his poor, should legitimately go hand in hand. The worship should inspire to the giving ; the giving should attest the sincerity of the worship.

We notice that Paul did not propose to have the handling of this money himself. He knew Corinth too well to expose himself to their jealousy, or to their suspicion of tampering with public monies. No ; they must choose their own men to take charge of this remittance. He would give them letters of introduction to Jerusalem ; and if the Corinthian brethren preferred it, he would go with them personally. But not a penny of their contribution would he touch himself.—Perhaps his example should not be exalted into a universal rule ; but it should certainly be the rule wherever, as here, there may be special liability to suspicion. It is better no doubt as a general rule that gospel ministers should be careful to avoid all occasion of suspicion as to their personal honesty in the handling of church funds.

5. Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia ; for I do pass through Macedonia.

6. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

7. For I will not see you now by the way ; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

8. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

9. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.

These plans for future missionary travel and labor, Paul seems to have formed as other missionaries do, according to their best judgment—subject to change and sometimes to disappointment. There were cases in which Paul received special direction from God by vision ; but ordinarily, he seems to have been left, as other men are, to his own wisdom and to prayer for God's providential guidance.

10. Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear : for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.

11. Let no man therefore despise him : but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me : for I look for him with the brethren.

Timothy was young, and perhaps specially youthful in appearance. Paul elsewhere implies a certain liability in

this direction to less esteem than his real merits should command (1. Tim. 4: 12).

12. As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

Apollos had been in Corinth before, as we infer from the circumstance that a party there were appropriating his name as their leader (1: 12). Whether this fact was among the reasons why he did not care to go then, we cannot say; but it is pleasant to notice that Paul had not the least fear to have him go—not the least jealousy lest he would foment party strife or head some sectional interest against himself.

13. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

14. Let all your things be done with charity.

The counsels and exhortations grouped in these verses seem to contemplate persecution, creating a special demand for moral heroism. Play the man—the hero; be strong against every foe.—And let everything ye do be done *in love*. The word *love* gives the sense here far better than “charity.” The internal history of the church suggests the urgent call for such an admonition.

15. I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

16. That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with *us*, and laboureth.

17. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

18. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

The house [household] of Stephanas appears in Chap. 1: 16, as the family whom Paul personally baptized, apparently the first or near the first fruits of his labors in Corinth. Paul commends them to the esteem, confidence

and co-operation of the church. He has been made glad as well as relieved in respect to personal wants by the arrival of the brethren named ;—but it should be noticed, they brought no gift from the Corinthian church. Rather their personal gifts supplied the lack from that church. To the shame of Corinth, be it hinted to them, they had given Paul nothing—had never sent anything to him ; in fact, had manifested so much jealousy and readiness to slander him, that he could not wisely and safely take any thing from them even if they had offered it. (See on Chap 9: 15–18).

19. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

20. All the brethren greet yon. Greet ye one another with a holy kiss.

21. The salutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand.

22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema. Maranatha.

23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

24. My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The first *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Phillipi by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus.

Aquila and Priscilla had lived at Corinth, for it was there that Paul formed their acquaintance (Acts 18: 1–3), and became an inmate of their family and a business partner in their occupation. At this writing they were with Paul at Ephesus, where again their house was the place of worship for a precious group of Christian people.

To Paul's usual salutation with his own hand, he here appends the very striking words of v. 22, which seem to have welled up from his very heart, not because he loved the sinner who would not love Christ less, but because he loved the Lord Jesus so much more, and had so keen and deep a sense of the ineffable, almost infinite guilt of *not* loving the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, indeed ; that man who *will* not love the Lord Jesus deserves to be anathema !—A full pause should follow “anathema.” The words “Maran-atha” are not any part of the first sentence, but are a distinct declaration, signifying, *The Lord cometh.*

The words are Aramean. They give special solemnity to the clause preceding. I say this with an impressive sense of the momentous truth that *the Lord is coming*, and then He will remember those who have guiltily withheld from him all the love of their hearts!

In closing this epistle, Paul's overflowing soul would bless all that love the Lord Jesus; but how could he announce blessings for those who love him not!

For all who worthily bear the Christian name he invokes the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to them sends assurances of his own personal love in the bonds of Christ—this for his farewell word:—Amen.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

As to *date*, this Epistle seems to have followed the first at an interval of not many months, supposably from spring to autumn of A. D. 57. The first epistle having been written at Ephesus in the spring, he left Ephesus during the summer ensuing and went into Macedonia. There in the course of the autumn he wrote this second Epistle, and in the winter following visited Corinth in person and there wrote his epistle to the Galatians.

As to *place* where written, the epistle itself shows him to have been in Macedonia. (See 7 : 5 and 8 : 1 and 9 : 2.)

The *occasion* and *subject-matter* of this epistle should receive attention.—This second epistle is an outgrowth of the first. If there had been no occasion for the first there would have been no second. That is to say, this second treats of a part (not all) of the same topics that occasioned the first and that constituted its themes of discussion. Some of those themes do not reappear in this epistle ; *e. g.* here is no definite discussion of their sectarian divisions ; nor of the general subject of fornication, licentiousness and marriage ; nor of the doctrine of conscience as to meats offered to idols, nor of “spiritual gifts” and the proper estimate and use of them ; nor of the laws of propriety in church assemblies, and the abuse of the Lord’s supper : nor of the resurrection.

But the case of incest reappears in this epistle and much is said which indicates that Paul felt a painful solicitude over the result of that case of discipline and great joy upon its successful issue. Much also appears here bearing upon that small party in Corinth who traduced Paul’s authority, resisted his influence, slandered his good name and labored

to thwart his policy. It becomes very plain here that this opposition bore heavily upon Paul's heart. It drew forth many words of self-vindication ; much that we find nowhere else as to his personal trials in his missionary life ; his self-sacrificing labors ; the spirit that animated them and his sustaining hope of blessed reward from his divine Master.—Comprehensively, these points in their various bearings form the staple subjects in this epistle.

Besides these we have the charitable collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, reappearing chaps. 8 and 9.—and in the closing chapters, yet more in the line of self-vindication against his traducers and severe rebuke of their spirit and measures.

One special lesson from this epistle, sometimes becoming painfully necessary to be studied in this world of varied moral trial—is the spectacle of a nobly good man, self-sacrificing, devoted and wise in an eminent degree, yet opposed, persecuted, maligned, tortured, subjected to a wearing, wasting conflict and antagonism in the bosom of one of his own beloved churches, and bearing up against this terrible onslaught of envy, hate and meanness, with much of the meekness and patience of his Master. The case should be made a special study. Fortunately it is exceptional in the Christian life ; yet Paul has not been the only sufferer from such calumny.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER the usual address Paul breaks forth in a strain of thanksgiving to God for the great joy and consolation of his heart over the tidings that had come to him of the better spiritual state of his beloved Corinthians (v. 1-7); then passes on to speak of his perils of life in Asia, from which God had delivered him in answer (it might be) to their prayers (v. 8-11): next, of his work among themselves (v. 12-14; of his plans for coming to see them which had been modified, yet not from any fickleness of mind but for valid reasons (v. 15-18); God's word and promises are stable, not changeful without reason (v. 19, 20); reposing on the power and veracity of God through his Spirit (v. 21, 22); Why he did not come to Corinth as he had purposed (v. 23, 24).

1. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

2. Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

The special points here are—(a) That Timothy having been associated with Paul at Ephesus in the writing of the first epistle, and therefore profoundly interested in all the pending issues at Corinth, is naturally with Paul in the writing of this epistle also: (b) That it addresses not the church at Corinth only but all the saints in all Achaia—the province of which Corinth was the capital. Under the Roman regime, then in force, Achaia included all southern

Greece, and Macedonia all the north country. The small churches or scattered brethren in Achaia, outside of Corinth, were naturally in close relations to the mother church. They are not alluded to by name elsewhere in this epistle.—The first epistle addressed, besides the Corinthian church proper, all who in every place call on the name of the common Lord.

3. Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4. Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounding by Christ.

The precious thoughts suggested here are that God tenderly notes and remembers all the sorrows and afflictions of his children, and pre-eminently those that come from honest service in his cause; that to all such he is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; that one object in comforting his laboring servants is that they may be the better able to comfort other saints in their afflictions.—In v. 5, “the sufferings of Christ” must be not those which Christ personally endured, but only such as those which his people endure in their labors for him. It is only in this sense that these sufferings “abound in us,” and that correspondingly, our consolations in Christ abound also. The more we suffer for Christ the greater the consolation he gives us. All christian experience testifies to this—that all honest loving sacrifices made for Christ bring their own rich and present reward.

6. And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

7. And our hope of you *is* steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.

In v. 6, the older textual authorities slightly change

the place of the middle clause, attaching it to the last and not to the first clause, thus : “ If we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation ; if we be comforted it is for your consolation which energizes [takes effect] in the patient endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer.” Our hope in your behalf is firm because we know that as ye share the suffering, so shall ye also the consolation. This blessed law of christian suffering is always and everywhere a precious comfort and joy.

8. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life :

9. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead :

10. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver : in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*;

11. Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

These troubles in Asia (supposably at Ephesus as in Acts 19), were so extreme that Paul at one time despaired of life, and felt himself destined to a speedy death. But God permitted this in order to teach him not to trust in himself or in man, but in God only—who could and would deliver—in answer to prayer. He suggests—we may hope not without reason—that the prayer of at least some of the dear ones at Corinth had been both offered and heard in his behalf. If many had joined in those prayers, so let them all join also in appropriate thanksgivings to God for delivering mercy.

12. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

13. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end ;

14. As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

I fail to detect any very close connection of thought between this passage and vs. 8–11 preceding. This, however, may be suggested, that the verses preceding are here to awaken fresh interest in his brethren at Corinth through sympathy with his perils in Asia; while v. 12ff. are in close connection with vs. 3–7, being some of the staple points of this epistle—the necessary vindication of himself before his columniators in Corinth.—Paul says it is a source of great and unceasing joy to him that he has conscientiously devoted himself to Christ's work both in Corinth and wherever else God has called him.—“Had our conversation,” means, not our talk but our *life*—the whole of our activities in the gospel of Christ.

V. 13 seems to allude tacitly to certain charges brought against Paul of underhanded movements, perhaps of clandestine correspondence, from which his enemies insinuated that they had been debarred. Paul protests his innocence of this charge. He is confident that in the end he shall be more than merely acquitted of all double dealing, yea, shall even compel their full acknowledgment of his sincerity, faithfulness and love, as they had done *in part* already. This limitation [“*in part*”] may raise the question between a partial acknowledgment in the church as a whole, or an acknowledgment from a part of the church [certain malecontents]—with the probabilities strongly in favor of the former. Paul trusts that their acknowledgement will be full to the point—that ye shall rejoice in us as we shall also in you—in the great day of the Lord Jesus.

Plainly Paul assumes the personal recognition of christian friends in the great day of Christ [and thenceforward forever], and of all those mutual relations in which we may have ministered to each other's spiritual life. He would then rejoice in his converts, and they also in him, (So also 1 Thess. 2: 19, 20.

15. And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;

16. And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.

17. When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

18. But *as God is true*, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

Having this confidence, I had been purposing to come to you that ye might receive yet other blessings through my labors. My plan was to go first to Corinth; thence to Macedonia; then return from Macedonia to Corinth, and thence proceed to Judea. This plan was not carried out; but instead, Paul went first into Macedonia and waited there for Titus to report to him from Corinth. The reason elsewhere given for this change, was that he chose not to go there in person till he knew the result of that case of discipline. (See below v. 23 and 2: 3 and 12: 20 and 13: 2, 10).

This change in an expressed purpose had been seized upon by his enemies and ascribed to fickleness and to some selfish, unworthy motive. Both these points, Paul denies;—(a) The charge of being fickle of purpose, saying, now yea, yea; and then nay, nay;—and (b) The charge of base motives—purposing “according to the flesh.”—In v. 18, the solemn asseveration—“God is true”—implies an intense feeling of indignation against his traducers, and a sense of the demand for an earnest defence. I protest there was no fickleness of purpose, but the best of reasons for my change of plan.

19. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timothens, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20. For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

It seems to have been due to association of ideas that Paul passes from the “yea and nay” with which he had been falsely charged, to the eternal verities, the everlasting faithfulness of the gospel promises which his associates and himself had preached among them. Really he means to say that as the gospel which he preached was forever true and honest, so he, in all his labors and plans, had also

wrought in the same spirit of honest fidelity to his Master and to his own convictions as to what it was wise to do. A nobly grand declaration is this—that all the promises of God [whatever and how many so ever, his words imply] are all in him, yea—positive, true ; and therefore also in him are *Amen* [even so], to the glory of God by us.

Silas and Timothy are named as having been his fellow-laborers in Corinth. Luke (Acts 18 : 5) says the same. This accounts for the name of Timothy associated with Paul in this letter (1 : 1).

21. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is God* ;

22. Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

The full sense of Paul's forcible words here is—He who hath brought us, together with you, *into Christ* and made us firm and strong in him, is God, who hath sealed us that we may be forever known as his, and hath given us the *earnest* of the Spirit—the pledge, the first fruits of salvation, guaranteeing all else we may need. Paul delights in this conception of the Spirit as an *earnest* of further blessings, having used it repeatedly (See below 5 : 5, and Eph. 1 : 14).

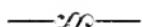
23. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

24. Nor for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy : for by faith ye stand.

This calling God to witness must assume that Paul felt keenly the charge made against him and the necessity of rebutting it by the most solemn asseverations.

Here he gives briefly the reason of his change of plan—*viz.*, to spare them those fearful inflictions of judgment which in the exercise of his Apostolic authority he might have been compelled to employ if he had gone. He was much exercised on this point ; it was a case of great importance. He longed exceedingly to have it result in the repentance of the offender and indeed, of the church also, both for the honor of the gospel and to spare both himself and them those painful inflictions which must otherwise follow.

In v. 24, Paul's personal modesty and good sense are prominent. We do not assume any lordship over your faith ; we would only be mutual helpers of your joy ; for ye stand in the faith, *i. e.* of the gospel as your only and sufficient foundation for *standing* at all. Paul assumes that while they were thus standing in the faith, it would be superfluous if not preposterous for himself to assume to control their faith. In their case the doubtful point was not in their faith but in their Christian bearing over that case of fearful crime in their communion.



CHAPTER II.

Paul explains more fully why he would not come to Corinth till the case of discipline there was settled (v. 1-5). Now that the offender is penitent he begs the church to forgive and comfort him (v. 6-11) ; speaks of his extreme anxiety over this case and from the delay in hearing the result (v. 12, 13) ; thanks God for the results of his gospel preaching—which are pleasing to God in the case of both the saved and the lost (v. 14-17).

1. But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.
2. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me ?
3. And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice ; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

To have gone to Corinth in person, under this crushing sorrow, knowing moreover that the severe measures which he assumed to be unavoidable would only grieve them the more, and there be none to alleviate his own griefs—this would not answer. He was confident that what would be joy to him would be joy to them also ; and, *vice versa*, what would be grief to himself would be to them. Hence the

wisdom of waiting in the hope that affectionate yet firm discipline would bring the remedy sought without those painful inflictions from which Paul's heart recoiled.

4. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

5. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

He had written them [in his first epistle] out of the deep anguish of his heart, not to grieve them but to assure them of his great love for them.

Verse 5 is somewhat difficult. The construction which is on the whole preferred may be given thus: If any one has caused grief, it is not *me* that he has grieved, but in a measure (not to be severe) you all. Not to be too severe upon them, he will admit that the great scandal in their church was to some extent a grief to them all and not to himself only. This concession was to their honor.—The word “if” in the first clause—“if any one has caused grief”—involves no uncertainty as to the fact. It is Paul's frequent method of saying—Now in respect to that man who caused such grief, it was not myself alone that he grieved, *etc.*

6. Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many.

7. So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him* and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

8. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him.

9. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

10. To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it* for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ;

11. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

“Such a man” means only—that man, being such as

he is,—*i.e.* now penitent and humbled. Let the punishment he has suffered suffice—that sentence of excommunication, passed by a majority vote of the church, by *the many*. This was, therefore, a self-governing church.—Now therefore, (v. 1), reversing your action, ye ought rather to forgive and comfort, lest, being such a man, now crushed down with penitent grief, he be swallowed up, drowned in the deeps of this more abundant sorrow. Wherefore, I exhort you, *make your love for him strong* [very expressive]; manifest it unmistakably.—For this purpose I have written unto you [*i.e.* in this letter], that I may know whether ye are obedient in all things to my directions.

The clause —“in the person of Christ,” which is literally—in the face or presence of Christ—raises the question between acting *in the person* of Christ, or doing a thing *before* Christ, as in his very presence. The latter is probably the right construction. The really penitent man, Paul would hasten to forgive, that we be not outwitted by Satan—he getting the better of us by driving this sorrowing, consciously outcast brother into despair.—It should be borne in mind that an excommunicate is thought of as “delivered over unto Satan” (1. Tim. 1: 20.) the God of this world, *i.e.* of all who are outside the church—he having [then] permission to afflict the body, and being only too happy to seize his opportunity to destroy the soul also. We know his devices: let him not be too sharp for us.—This case is full of useful suggestions as to cases of extreme discipline.

12. Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

13. I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

Journeying from Ephesus into Europe, Troas lay in his route. There Paul found a wide door opened; but strong as this attraction was, his anxiety for Corinth and his disappointment in not finding Titus, were so great he could not stay, but hastened on to Macedonia.

14. Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth

us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

16. To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for those things?

17. For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

The word “savor” is used indiscriminately in respect to the senses of taste and of smell; but the words used by Paul for “savor” and “sweet savor” refer to smell only—odors therefore, as of burning incense; here apparently suggested by the usage of burning incense in triumphal processions. Paul suggests that his preaching of Christ was grateful, pleasing to God, even as sweet incense; and that God delighted in the results of this preaching, and in the cases of both the saved and the lost:—this gospel influence being that of life unto life to the saved; of death unto death to the lost. Paul does not say that God is *equally pleased* with either result—just as happy when the gospel works unto death as when it works unto life; but only that his gospel labor is accepted of God in both cases; *i.e.* whether men are saved or are lost.

Doubtless the truth is that God rejoices supremely over the saved; while in the case of the lost, he accepts the result as the best which He and his ministering servants can attain; and then overrules it for all the good possible to himself in the case.—The special point made by Paul is to thank God for the gospel triumph which God gives him, and to say that God accepts his honest work with joyous delight, whether this work results in saving or in not saving human souls.

“Who is sufficient for these things?”—contemplates the overwhelming responsibility of such gospel work—evermore issuing in the salvation of one class and the deeper damnation of the other. Working day after day at that diverging point where men under the gospel part asunder, some for the way of life, other some for the way of death—where a word or a prayer may turn the scale and shape

the eternal result ; who is sufficient for trusts so great and for the shaping of issues so momentuous !

But it comforts Paul that he can say :—We are not like the many who adulterate the word of God, toning it down, or trimming it to the tastes of bad men ; but in all sincerity, as men of God, acting in behalf of God, we speak *in Christ*—*i.e.* in the sphere of his presence, his love, and his service.



CHAPTER III.

This chapter is unique, one line of thought running through the whole. It will be interesting, and perhaps not specially difficult to trace this course of thought from its beginning to its close.—The key to it lies in this conception—*transformation of character represented by the gospel written on the heart by the Spirit of God*.—Paul starts with the idea of a simple letter of recommendation ; which suggests, next, that his converts there in Corinth are his letters of recommendation—first thought of as written on his own loving heart ; but next, as an “*epistle of Christ*,” of which himself had been only the amanuensis, and the Spirit of God the real writer ;—which leads him to exalt the Spirit’s efficiency, and to disclaim this efficiency for himself. Then there comes up to his mind the contrast between the law written on stones, and this gospel written on living hearts. This contrast he develops in many particulars, setting forth the inferior glory of that ancient law, which yet shone symbolically in the face of Moses, calling for that veil over his face ;—which suggests the unbelief that darkened the spiritual vision of the Jews,—but the glory of our Lord Jesus, seen by us with face unveiled, works blessed transformation through the Holy Spirit of the Lord.

1. Do we begin again to commend ourselves ? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you ?

2. Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men :

3. *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

It is quite supposable that some Jewish emissaries from Jerusalem had appeared in Corinth, fomenting the disaffection toward Paul, but armed with letters of recommendation from the head centre of the Judaizing party. If so, the suggestive force of this slight circumstance was turned to admirable account in the fertile brain of the Great Apostle toward producing this wonderful chapter.

Do we [Timothy and myself] need letters of recommendation to you or from you ? Nay, indeed, ye yourselves are our letters ; we have the imprint in our own loving hearts, for all men to know and to read.—Then, slightly modifying the figure (v. 3);—Because ye are shown to be the Epistle of Christ, written by himself through our instrumentality—the lettering being done not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God ; and not on tablets of stone, but of flesh, the heart's own living flesh.—Thus Christian character, made and molded by the Spirit of God, is the result which is here compared to a letter engraved on the susceptible heart.

4. And such trust have we through Christ to Godward :

5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency *is* of God.

6. Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament ; not of the letter, but of the spirit ; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

The point of this “ trust ” I take to be—that their gospel labors had really been blessed of God unto this result, *viz.*, a transformed character—a new spiritual life in their souls. But his modest humility recoils from assuming the efficiency or the honor for himself—even of thinking, doing any proper intellectual work, purely of himself. All our sufficiency [competency, capacity], is of God, who has made us “ sufficient ” [capable] ministers of this new covenant—the gospel scheme. Very pertinently Paul has the same word in v. 6, as in v. 5, for “ sufficient,” “ sufficiency.” God has *sufficed* us (if we may coin a word to

match his), as gospel ministers—this sufficiencry lying in the living energy of the Spirit, and not in the dead forms of the letter. The mere “letter” raises hopes that end in death. It is only the Spirit that breathes life into men’s souls.—Paul had never the least faith in ritualism.

7. But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away;

8. How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?

9. For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

10. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

11. For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

We must ascribe it to the perpetual antagonism of the Judiaizing faction that Paul feels so keenly and speaks so strongly of the “letter that kills;” of “the ministration of death, engraven in stones,” *etc.* The old law, given through Moses became death-bearing to the unbelieving Israel when they put it in the place of the gospel, and sought salvation in and through its forms and ceremonies, or even when they rested upon its moral code as their reliance for salvation from sin. That law had a certain “glory”—had points of excellence never to be ignored; but its first value was in its power of condemnation against the sinner, a “a ministration of condemnation;”—compared with which “the ministration of righteousness” revealing God’s mode of pardon and justification through Christ, must be superabundantly glorious.

This praise of the gospel scheme as compared with the Jewish scheme of salvation through law without gospel, should be carefully studied in the light of the living Judaism with which Paul had to deal—that Pharisaic formalism; that idolatry of Moses and the law; that disparagement of Jesus and his gospel—which confronted him in

every primitive church and constituted in many respects the most inveterate opposition which his gospel labor had to encounter.

In these verses, Paul, (so to speak) shakes his kaleidoscope to bring up perpetually new aspects of the great fact set forth, *viz.*, the higher glory of the gospel scheme as contrasted with the law.

The one engraven on stones ; the other administered by the Spirit—the latter must be the more glorious. The one is unto and for condemnation, the other unto life through pardon and real intrinsic righteousness :—the latter must therefore surpass in glory. Though the glory of the former was conspicuous when it first shone out, it was marvellously eclipsed and thrown into the shade by “the glory that excelleth.” Finally, that one of the two whose purposes were, to a certain extent, transient, had a certain glory ; but that which was never to pass away ought to be and is transcendently glorious.

12. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech :

13. And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished :

14. But their minds were blinded : for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament ; which *vail* is done away in Christ.

“Having such hope”—*i. e.* in the enduring and pre-eminent glory of the gospel scheme, we use great *freedom* of speech [better than “plainness”], this being the common word for speaking boldly, with no self-restraint. We are not like Moses drawing a veil over his face, so that the people should not gaze upon the disappearing glory which was destined to cease. This clause is difficult, the word “end” [*telos*] being susceptible of two senses ; (a) Of time —a terminus as to time ; and (b) Of result or purpose—that *for which* a thing is done. Hence we must choose between (a) (as above)—so that the people should not see the subsiding, waning, disappearance of that perishable glory :—or (b)—so that they should not see through into the ultimate result of that system which God was to displace by the gospel.

The former best corresponds to the usage of the words and to the grammatical construction. Moreover, there is a reason for it. To have witnessed the subsidence of that splendor would naturally lessen their reverence and abate from their impression of the divine. But we have to do rather with the meaning of what is said than with the reasons for the proceeding. Upon the latter we can only speculate.

But (v. 14), their minds were blinded ; their spiritual perceptions of truth were *hardened*, dulled ; for until this day that same vail (which is suggested by the vail over the face of Moses) remains upon their eyes when they read the Old Testament [the law of Moses]—it not being revealed to them that the old system was to be superceded in Christ. Paul's word suggests that this revealing would result in the unvailing—the removal of the vail. Literally—it not being *unveiled* to them that the old glory is to be abolished in Christ, being thrown entirely into the shade and made to disappear under the blaze of his transcendent glory.*

15. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

16. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

Unto this day they read Moses with that vail upon their face ; but when they shall turn to the Lord Jesus, to know him and his salvation, that vail will be removed.

17. Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

18. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Lord Jesus is essentially that “Spirit” of which he had spoken in v. 3 ;—“written with the Spirit of the living God”; and also v. 6 ;—“the Spirit giveth life.” The Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit work coördinately, the Spirit being the Revealer of Christ, being sent by Christ to represent himself and do his work. In such a connection as the present, their respective agencies are so entirely

* This translation turns upon a modified text, changing “that which” [‘o ti] into “that” [oti].

harmonious, not to say identical, that there is no occasion to distinguish the one from the other.

The words—“there is liberty”—are sometimes egregiously abused, as if Paul could mean that under the Spirit’s presence and light, men are free to anything they will! What he meant should be ascertained from the connection of thought here. So studied and ascertained, his meaning will be found to be this;—liberty in the sense of free, unobstructed vision, with no veil darkening the sight and shutting off the real truth of God. In this free unobstructed vision, we all, beholding with face unvailed (and each for himself) the glory of the Lord Jesus—the supreme moral beauty and excellence that shine in him—are transformed into the same image, so that his glory becomes reproduced in us—one element after another being transferred from his character into ours—borrowed and developed in our own.

“Beholding as in a glass”—rather, a mirror—the unexpressed antithesis being (probably) with seeing face to face. The light of Jesus seen in the mirror, with no veil over our own eyes, is precious and transforming; but a yet higher vision remains—when we shall behold his glory face to face and “see him as he is.”

In the last clause the literal translation is—“By the Lord the Spirit”—the design of this peculiar construction being supposedly to put it in harmony with v. 17—“Now the Lord is that Spirit”—it being Paul’s object to suggest that in this transformation of spiritual character, Christ and the Spirit work coördinately. For really it is the glory of Christ that is revealed, but the Agent in this revelation is the Spirit.

The words, “even as”—*i. e.* according as [kathaper] are not without difficulty. I suggest that the sense may be—as is wont to be under the Spirit’s influence—even as the Spirit of God in its normal operations always transforms human hearts into the image of Christ.

The doctrine of these closing verses is richly instructive and morally grand; *viz.* That the vision, the mental contemplation of the character of *Christ*, has under the Spirit’s influence, a transforming spiritual power. We see moral beauty; we love it; and so we are unconsciously molded into it.

The philosophy of the scriptures is always the philos-

ophy of the best common sense—of which we have a fine illustration in the point now before us—*the great law of moral reformation in character.* John understood it and spake of it as truthfully and clearly as Paul, particularly in the passage ;—“We know that when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him, *for* we shall see him as he is.” Naturally, by the normal working of mind upon mind, of heart upon heart, it will come to pass that when Christ shall be perfectly manifested before his people, they will become perfectly like him, *for* [this is John’s reasoning and it discloses his philosophy]—“*for*, we shall see him as he is”—shall see him not dimly ; not mistakenly ; not with some false apprehensions blended perhaps with some true—but in all points according to the reality—“as he is.” Thus the revelations of Jesus made to believing souls by the Spirit of God are truthful, just, always according to the reality. Hence they can never fail to be morally wholesome, producing the right and not the wrong moral results.—And then they are so rich, so attractive, so enrapturing ; they produce such conviction of their supreme beauty and fitness, that they charm the soul not only into admiration and love but into imitation. How gently yet how powerfully do such revelations of Christ rebuke whatever we are conscious of in ourselves as unlike Christ and unworthy of his love ! Then, with what agony of prayer and with what intense aspirations do we implore, not forgiveness only but renewing and transforming grace so that we may never

“Grieve any more by our sins
The bosom on which we recline.”

As to the broad interpretation of this chapter ; Paul labors to put this consummation of the gospel’s moral power in strong contrast with the best moral results which Pharisaic Jews ever reached by mere “law.” “Law” in their sense and in their use of it was only a ministration of condemnation and death. Though as revealed by the Lord to Moses it had a certain perceptible “glory,” yet how dim at best compared with the transcendent glory of the gospel !

CHAPTER IV.

With such a gospel in our charge and with such conceptions of its perfect adaptation to make men pure and lovely in character, let me next (Paul would say) speak of the way we have fulfilled our commission among and toward you.—Under great hindrances and embarrassments we have not been discouraged (v. 1) we have been honest and truthful in all good conscience (v. 2); if some have failed to see the glory of the gospel, they are the lost whom Satan has blindfolded (v. 3, 4): our gospel light has come direct from God (v. 5, 6); yet our personal weakness and affliction have been exceedingly great (v. 7–9): even to the constant peril of death (v. 10–12); but we have labored under the power of a faith which makes the things of God seem to be realities and which looks steadfastly at things unseen and eternal (v. 13–18).

1. Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;
2. But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Paul has yet more to say of his gospel work at Corinth, resuming points touched but not fully developed before (as in 3: 12).—“As we have obtained mercy, we faint not”—will not be disheartened; can never abandon our gospel enterprise. The great mercy of gospel light and forgiveness—this mercy which met Paul when “breathing out threatening and slaughter,” and brought him to prayer, faith and love, he can never forget:—The words of v. 2 are strong.—We have declared off from the hidden things of shame; we walk no more in craft, using God's word deceitfully; our one supreme purpose has been to set forth the truth of God in such a way as must commend itself to every man's conscience before God.—These allusions to “deceit,” dishonesty, secretly shameful conduct—must be supposed to refer tacitly to the policy and the methods of his enemies at Corinth.—Paul assumes that downright honesty of heart is the first qualification for the gospel minister.

3. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost :

4. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

“The lost” here are “them that perish” (as in 2:15), Paul’s descriptive word being the same in both passages. He knew that there were such, to whom the beauty and glory of the gospel are things hidden, not seen. The reason is that Satan, the God of this world, has blinded their unbelieving minds so that they shall not see. Satan is afraid of that transforming gospel light. He knows but too well that law of its transforming power which Paul brings out at the close of chap. 3. So he heads off that light with his utmost tact, blinding the mind, fostering unbelief, diverting attention to the fascinating things of time and sense—any thing to shut off these rays of the light of God as they shine in Jesus. .

5. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.

6. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In v. 6, we have a beautiful allusion to the first created light which God spake into being :—“Let there be light;”—and light was. The God who has such power to command light to shine out where all before was darkness, hath shined into our previously dark souls,—For what ends and with what results ?—To give that intellectual, spiritual light which consists in the knowledge of God’s great glory as it appears in the person of Christ. “The glory of God” in such a connection, is manifestly his *gospel love*, which is at once his chief glory, and also the chief revelation he has made of himself in the gift of his Son.

7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8. *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair ;

9. Persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ;

10. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

Considering this light of divine truth thrown into our souls by his mandate as a *treasure* to be kept, we have it at best only in vessels of earthly mold, to the end that the greatness of his power may appear manifestly to be of God and not of us. This result (Paul would suggest) makes us content and even happy to be weak, that the strength of this gospel word may be the more manifestly of God.

In vs. 8, 9, we find a series of antithetic terms setting forth that Paul and his associates had sore afflictions, yet afflictions always held within such limits as could be endured. The well poised words show on the one side how far these troubles reached, and on the other, the bounds beyond which they did not pass.—Our auth. version begins ;—“troubled, yet not distressed ;” but Paul's words allude, not to his feelings, but to his surroundings—*i.e.* not to what is subjective to himself, but to what is objective. Better, therefore, “Stricken, but not straitened insuperably”—the first word being the common one for tribulation, the bruising that tore the flesh ; and the second, suggesting the idea of being cramped, cornered, shut up within close quarters that left no power of escape.—Next, “in doubt, but not in despair,” is subjective—of his state of mind—a state in which one is troubled to know what to do, yet not thrown out of his wits—not hopelessly non-plussed or disheartened.—“Persecuted” of men, yet not “forsaken” of God. “Cast down,” but not perishing—not fatally prostrated.—The strong expression—“bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” means—always exposed to a violent and cruel death like his, so that we have ever present a sharp, keen sense of that death, and

feel that any moment we may follow him to a martyr's doom. This is but a living death—yet we endure it without a murmur, that “the life of Jesus” may be the more abundantly manifest in us ;—and of this life, ye have the benefit. The death has its moral effect upon us, but the life upon you. Our bodies stand the peril ; but our souls take the inspirations of heavenly life ; and of this, ye have the result in the quickened power of the gospel we preach.—This grand sentiment is too good to be passed over lightly—that the afflictions, reaching almost to death-agonies—being actually death-perils always hanging over them—were in a sense death to them but life to the church, their converts at Corinth. Men living so bore into their work a spiritual power instinct with the life of Christ. If those persecutions were instigated by Satan, he outwitted himself ; his malice served only to baffle his own schemes and break down his own kingdom. Jesus breathed into his persecuted servants a power of life in their ministry of the gospel which Satan was powerless to resist.—This explains why Paul gloried in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest on him the more abundantly (2 Cor. 12: 9, 10).

In v. 11, the clause, “For we, though living, are always bound over to death for the sake of Jesus,”—looks to the case of men death-doomed, always feeling, therefore, that they are under sentence of death, and that any hour may bring the execution.

13. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe, and therefore speak ;

14. Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.

15. For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

The power that sustained through such perils was that of faith, of the sort which Paul finds spoken of in Ps. 116: 10; “I believed ; therefore have I spoken ;”—a faith which transmutes unseen things into realities. This thought shapes the course of remark throughout the remaining verses of the chapter.—Coupled with that simple

power of faith is also the truth which we know and believe—*viz.* that He who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, will raise up us also and present us in triumph before the Father.—“Along with you,” was designed to awaken their personal interest in this sublime consummation. For we endure all this affliction for your sakes no less than for our own, that this abounding grace may call forth manifold thanksgivings from the many, to the glory of God.

16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Under these inspiring considerations we cannot faint through discouragement (the same word as in v. 1.) Though the flesh, the outer man, be wasting away, the inner man, the spirit, is made new, with reinvigorating energy, day by day—the soul living but the more vigorously for the dying of the body.

V. 17 is one of those marvellous passages in which Paul’s Greek seems to defy translation into corresponding English. The best rendering will be only an approximation;—*e.g.*;—“For the momentary lightness of our affliction works out for us an eternal weight of glory surpassing all description”—that cannot be exaggerated though you multiply hyperbole into hyperbole. This latter expression is borrowed substantially from Paul.

Then (v. 18), “while we look not” *etc.* is precisely—we being supposed to look not—*i. e.* provided we do not put our eye on things seen but only on things unseen; for the things seen here with the eye of flesh are momentary; but the things not seen are eternal. This puts with great force the point of “walking by faith, not by sight”—ever-more controlled by the things seen with the eye of faith and not by the things seen with the eye of sense.

So Paul represents the spiritual economy and profit of these light afflictions. They are a very small consideration to pay for an infinite treasure. They work out for us fruits of immeasurable glory in the end. Why should the man of faith ever shrink from any endurance of suffering, hardship, trial, when he knows the reward thereof will be so immeasurably vast, reaching onward through the very eternity of our future being?



CHAPTER V.

THE new house for the soul after death (v. 1-4), for which we long and labor, seeking to be accepted of God (v. 5-9)—with our eye on the final judgment and its eternal awards (v. 10); knowing the fearfulness of those issues we persuade men to flee from the wrath to come (v. 11); which accounts for our intense zeal (v. 12, 13); also the love of Christ constrains us and why (v. 14, 15); and begets a new life (v. 16, 17); the ministry being to reconcile men to God (v. 18, 19); we, his ambassadors, implore men to be reconciled through the atonement made in Christ (v. 20, 21).

1. For we know that, if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Notice the logical connection with the closing verses of the preceding chapter;—We look steadfastly away unto those unseen things of the eternal state—for we all know that when our earthly tent shall be taken down, we have a building of God—quite another and different house from

this—not hand-made as this, nor of transient duration, but eternal in the heavens.—“We know that *if*,”—but this “*if*” implies not the least uncertainty as to the fact, and might better be rendered *when*;—whenever this earthly investiture of our souls—a tent-like structure—shall be struck, like the tents of the Arabs, for removal, then we have another in readiness—not *shall* have at some day yet more remote, but have (present tense) another, coming directly from God, otherwise than through the agency of such natural law as builds this earthly tent.

For (v. 2) in this (*i.e.* while in this tent) we groan with intense desire to be clothed with this new soul-covering which is from heaven—inasmuch as being thus clothed, we shall not be found naked at the final day, for to this day we must suppose the “being found” to refer.—“For we, being in this [frail] tent, are groaning under a sense of burden [the tent being at once heavy and frail]—not that we wish to be unclothed but to be clothed, far better, so that the mortal shall be swallowed up into and by the new life.

We defer the further consideration of the great questions here involved, until the whole passage shall be fully before us.

5. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

The improved texts omits “also” after “who,” reading—“who hath given unto us the earnest” [first-fruits] “of the Spirit.”

The great question of interpretation here, is the sense of the words—“wrought us for this very thing.”—Is this in the *physical* sense of constituting our physical nature for this new and great change; or in the *spiritual* sense of awakening these intense and heavenly aspirations for this future blessedness?—Either is supposable, and good critics are divided between them.

I must favor the spiritual rather than the physical sense—because the drift of thought is upon the “earnest desire” (v. 2); the groaning under the burden and the longing therefore for the better house (v. 6); and moreover, the spiritual sense is certainly suggested by the appended clause—“who hath given us the earnest of the

Spirit”—*i.e.* thus moving our souls to these aspirations. On the other hand, giving us the earnest of the Spirit has no natural relation to the physical organization under which we may be supposed to be constituted for such a transformation.

6. Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7. (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8. We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

Here for the first time in this passage, Paul uses the word “body” [soma] instead of “house,” “tent” [“tabernacle”], “building.”—“While at home in the body”—occupying it as our house—we are out of home—away from home, as to the Lord, in the sense of being far from him. Paul’s Greek word rendered “absent” is more significant and comprehensive than our word *absent*.

In v. 7, “for” makes logical connection, not with being “at home in the body,” but only with being “absent from the Lord;” for as to the former, we walk without the help of faith; for the latter we depend on our faith wholly.—With these certainties that come to us through faith, we are not only confident, but well-pleased, delighted, rather to be away from home in the sense of being out of this body, and to be at home—before the Lord. “Wherefore we labor”—or better, we are ambitious, aspiring; we make it a point of honor, to be accepted before him—objects of his good pleasure—whether in this body or out of it.

The legitimate sense of Paul’s several words in this remarkable passage being now before us, we may profitably give special attention to the truths he here assumes and teaches.

The following points seem to be unquestionable.

1. That he speaks of a *material body* as a *home for the soul*, giving to it the names—“Our earthly house”; “this tabernacle”; “a building of God”; “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”; “our house which is from heaven.”

2. That this is to be *taken on immediately at death*. He makes a special point of this, for he says, we recoil from being found naked [without any sort of body], and that our great desire is, “not to be *unclothed*, *i. e.* left strictly disembodied, with no body investing our spirit; but to be clothed, that this mortal may develop into real, abiding life.

3. He certainly assumes that this second body—the one from heaven, made of God—is a great advance upon the present one, and therefore an object of longing desire.

4. It may be noticed that in the first five verses, Paul refrains from using the word “body” [soma], but chooses other descriptive terms;—“earthly house”; “tabernacle”; “building,” *etc.*—But yet more important is the entire omission of the word “resurrection” and of all allusion to that great fact of our future being.

Hence it would seem that Paul has fully taught us here that the state intermediate between death and the final resurrection is not precisely a *disembodied one*, a state of soul-life with no bodily clothing, house, building; but that God provides for the soul immediately at death, a material investing, somewhat analogous to this earthly body.

But on another question, *viz.*, what relations this second body—that of the intermediate state—bears to the resurrection body, the abode of the soul after the judgment, he has said nothing that is absolutely explicit.

It is remarkable that here is no allusion in terms to the resurrection. There is nothing bearing definitely on the question whether the resurrection body is to be yet a third, distinct from the second brought to view here, or whether it be identically the same. This one, here brought specially to view, is said to be made directly by God—*i. e.* under laws of divine agency which leave out human hands; and also, to be “*eternal* in the heavens.”—Are we to assume such emphasis upon the word “*eternal*” as would foreclose all change at the point of the general resurrection and final judgment?

10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

This comes logically from our earnest desire to be accepted of God. We labor with supreme endeavor to be always well-pleasing to God, *for* of necessity we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, each to receive his final award of bliss or woe according to his deeds while in the body—literally, the things by means of the body [dia]—in connection with the body—showing that the issues of that momentous day hinge precisely upon this earthly life—its deeds of good or evil. Such is the doctrine of all scripture;—*e. g.* Matt. 25: 31–46 and Rom. 14: 10–12 and 2: 6–16 and Rev. 22: 12.

11. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

12. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

13. For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.

“Knowing the terror of the Lord”—the fearfulness of such a judgment before his bar, the tremendous, eternal issues pending upon it—we do our utmost to persuade men to flee from this wrath to come, and be at peace with the Great Judge ere it be too late.

“But we are made manifest unto God;” He knows us perfectly; all our work is before him. We must suppose Paul to say this with his eye upon the faction in Corinth who were maligning his good name and his work. To their conscience he hoped he could appeal. He speaks in self-vindication, more to aid his friends in standing for gospel truth and for its faithful ministers than for mere self-defense.

In v. 13. we have the nearly obsolete word “whether” in the sense of if. If it be charged against us that we are unduly excited—[“much learning hath made thee mad”] it is due to our great zeal for God. If on the other hand, we seem very moderate, even tame; it is all for your sake, to obviate the scandal against us on the other tack.—So men objected against Christ and John Baptist;—one ate

where he ought not to; and the other did not eat at all to suit them. Some men thought Paul too much in earnest—too impassioned ; and others criticised him as too dull. Paul gives his reasons for these apparently extreme manifestations.—Paul should not be supposed to admit that he was really “beside himself.” He says only—If it should seem so to you, this explains my great earnestness.

14. For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead :

15. And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.

Yet another reason—the *great* reason why Paul’s heart is on fire in his gospel work : The love of Christ *constrains* him—grasps him ; holds him fast, and gives him no rest—as his word seems to suggest.—Is this “love of Christ,” Paul’s love of Christ, or Christ’s love for him ?—Primarily, the latter :—the love of Christ for Paul as the context plainly shows—that love which moved Christ to die for our lost race. Ultimately, of course, this love of Christ begets responsive love toward Christ which Paul feels in the very depths of his soul.—From the fact that Christ died for all, Paul assumes—(a) That these “all” were utterly, hopelessly dead, lost beyond self-recovery ;—and (b) That one of Christ’s definite objects in his death for sinners was this :—to move those who have life by and through his death to live no more unto themselves but unto him because he has died for them and has risen again to serve them still by his intercessions in their behalf above. Christ has precious work for them to do in extending the blessings of his death to the greatest possible number. He calls them into his kingdom and gives them personal salvation that they may help onward this mighty endeavor—the saving of lost souls.

Knowing how this great enterprise is in the mind and on the heart of Christ ; appreciating Christ’s purpose in giving him salvation, he can do no less than consecrate to this gospel work his best and utmost energies.

16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after

the flesh : yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

17. Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.

Henceforth we think little of men as to their personal and earthly relations. We think of and care for men only as to their soul's salvation.

To "know men after the flesh," is to look at them on their fleshly side, in the line of honor, distinction, profit from their acquaintance *etc.*, *etc.*, and over against this lies the knowing them as immortal beings, to be saved, or to perish. The latter fills the vision of the apostle.

Correspondingly, "to know Christ after the flesh" is to take those carnal views of his reign as Messiah which were current among the Jews. This was seeing Christ from a fleshly point of view—imputing to him worldly aims and objects which were never real in his mind but which were present with great power in the mistaken souls of Paul's countrymen.

"If any man *be in Christ*"—this most expressive phrase signifying that he is absorbed in love to Christ ; consecrated to the service of Christ ; drawn into deep communion with the Spirit of Christ ; living in the sphere of Christ, so that he knows and cares for little else.—So being "in Christ," there is in his case "a new creation"—the precise sense of Paul's words. The old things have passed away ; behold, all have become new. The old life with its motives, its affections, its impulses—the things it loved and the things it did not love—all have passed away, and a new life ensues.—Paul's words come apparently from Isa. 43 : 18, 19, "Remember no more the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing."

18. And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation :

19. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

All these great results are of God as the source of the power that produces them—a truth put in fewest words yet of immense significance. All human salvation comes from him. His alone was the love that gave it birth in the gift of his Son, and his alone is the love that makes this gift effective by the second great gift—his Spirit. It is he who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, calling us back from our rebellion into willing obedience and love; (1) By the sacrifice of Christ for our sins, thus making forgiveness possible;—and (2). By this manifestation of his love, making repentance actual.

To us, his apostles and ministers, God has committed this ministry of reconciliation, to persuade men to be reconciled to God;—to testify that God is reconciling the world to himself in and through Christ, no more imputing to them their sins, but freely and perfectly forgiving.—The collocation of the words—“God was in Christ *etc.*”—I think is misleading—the precise sense being not that God was *in* Christ, but that he was reconciling the world in and by means of Christ.

The fact, so precious to Paul that he repeats it again and again, is that God has given to his servants this ministry of reconciliation, taking them into service as his ambassadors to carry into effect the treaty of peace already negotiated; *i. e.* to beseech and implore sinners to be reconciled unto God on the basis of the proposed peace. It is as if God's own voice rang through their lips—as if they spake words for God, on his authority and at his instance, when they besought men to desist from their sins and yield their souls in loving obedience to their heavenly Father.

21. For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Provision is made for this reconciliation in the sacrifice of Christ for our sins—a fact which logically connects this last verse with those that next precede.—Reconciliation to God in and through Christ is made possible (Paul would

say) because [“for”] “God hath made him to be sin for us” who was not at all a sinner himself.

Here the precise sense in which God made Christ to be sin for us, becomes a vital question.—It certainly cannot mean that he made him to be a *sinner* for us. It cannot mean that he made him in any abstract sense to be a *sin per se*—this being at once impossible, and utterly irrelevant because useless and even ruinous toward any agency for human salvation.

On the positive side, we have to consider—(1.) The construction—a *sin-offering*—a sacrifice for sin—with reference to the sin-offerings in the Mosaic system.

The chief objection to this is that no other case of such usage of this Greek word “sin” [amartia] appears elsewhere.—But this objection does not seem to me insuperable. This case of its use in this sense may be an outgrowth of the Mosaic sacrifices, present to Paul’s thought and shaping this expression. It might be legitimate to use the word so once and but once. The suggestive influence that brought it to Paul’s thought here is obvious—too obvious to make the repetition of such cases of usage at all necessary.

(2.) The phrase may bear this general sense :—God hath caused [suffered] him to be *treated as a sinner*; i. e. by “not sparing his own Son but *delivering* him up for us all” (Rom. 8: 32); “who was *delivered* for our offences” (Rom. 4: 25); “delivered by the determinate counsel of God” (Act 2: 23). Less than this, the words cannot mean.

The order of Paul’s words and his use of the negative (“knew *no sin*”) are both deserving of special notice. Paul puts the words in this order :—“Him not knowing sin, He [God] hath made sin for us” etc.—an order which indicates that the fact of Christ’s sinlessness was purposely made prominent.—Then, moreover, his choice of the negative particle for “not” is specially suggestive. Unlike our English, the Greek has two negative particles; the one absolute; the other somewhat variously qualified—often a hypothetical negative, indicating that the negation is *assumed, supposed*. In the present case, the special sense of this negative particle bears us back to the thought of God and implies that while *well aware* that Christ was sinless, he yet suffered him to be *treated as a sinner*, or, as the sense

may be, made him a sin-offering. This way of putting the case implies that God must have had very special reasons for treating his own Son as a sinner when he knew so well that he was personally sinless.

That we might be righteous before God stands antithetically over against his being sin for us. *Treated as righteous* must certainly be implied here; while the actually becoming righteous by being saved from sin is a sentiment fully in harmony with the genius of the gospel scheme. Such harmony does not prove that this spiritual transformation is the thing affirmed here. It does prove, however; that no objection can lie against this construction on the score of its being not true in fact.



CHAPTER VI.

IN self-defence against the hostile faction at Corinth Paul shows how he has fulfilled his high commission as ambassador for Christ (v. 1–10); the story fills both his mouth and his heart, and he wishes their hearts might be full likewise (v. 11–13): he warns them against intimate social connection with unbelievers, and exhorts to a pure life and a close walking with God (v. 14–18).

1. We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

The Italic words, “with him,” having no corresponding words in Greek, the question is open whether the “working together” of the apostles [“we”] is with each other, or with God and Christ. The obvious allusion to v. 18–20 [previous chapter] decides in favor of the latter—the thought being of coöperative work with God and with Jesus Christ.

In this strain of exhortation, Paul would plead in behalf of his Divine Master, that they should not allow the

offers of divine mercy to be made to them in vain. “Grace” here can mean nothing less or other than God’s kind offers of mercy through Christ.—Paul enforces his appeal by words of the Lord out of Isaiah (49: 8)—which words assume that there is with God “an accepted time and a day of salvation” in which he bends his ear, graciously, tenderly, to human prayer. Paul’s own comment upon those words is—“Behold, the accepted time” for you is *now*; the day of salvation is *now!*—An ambassador of peace from his Master, he insists upon immediate and decisive action. Let your heart welcome the offered grace to day! Now is your time! The King Eternal, the Almighty God, should not be trifled with!

3. Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

4. But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5. In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

6. By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned;

7. By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left;

8. By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true;

9. As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10. As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

In all these particulars Paul bears witness to the way he has labored in the gospel to avoid giving offense or causing any man to stumble over an objectionable ministration of the gospel, seeking in all things to approve himself as a worthy servant of God.

In the long series of descriptive terms which follow, Paul uses the same preposition “in” [“en”] through verses 4, 5, 6, and the first two clauses of v. 7, so that we should read literally (v. 6, 7) “in purity, in knowledge,

in long-suffering" *etc.* "in the word of truth ; in the power of God."—At this point his preposition is changed to one having the sense, *by* or *through* [dia] by means of the armor of righteousness, right and left-handed ; through honor and through disgrace ; through evil report and good.—Then follows a series of seven similar antithetic clauses, the first word having before it "as" [as]—"as deceivers and yet true" *etc.* In this series the word "as" in some cases means only that they are *treated* so—are assumed to be such ; while in other cases, it manifestly carries the admission, or even as the case may be, the declaration that they really are so—the nature of the case being the only criterion for deciding in which sense the word should be taken.—Thus "as deceivers" means—treated as deceivers; disowned, discarded as dishonest men, yet really most sincere and truthful. "As unknown"—more than strangers ; as men not fit to be recognized among respectable people—yet well known and truly worthy of esteem. "As dying"—which looks, not to their being reputed so, but to the actuality of their case. They live a dying life, in the sense of being perpetually exposed to martyrdom. As Paul wrote (1 Cor. 15: 31). "I protest to you, I die daily." Yet through God's preserving hand, behold we live.—"As chastened," really so (not in any reputed sense), yet not killed, for we still survive these afflictions. "As sorrowful"—really so and not so merely in their estimation ; always sorrowful under burdens of grief over the sins of men ; "yet always rejoicing." for the joy of the Lord is our everlasting strength. When does the Lord ever fail to give us tears of joy, blending with our tears of sorrow ; songs in the heart, welling up in our sorest griefs !—"As poor ;" yet this being poor was rather a fact of reality than a condition merely imputed by their enemies to their dishonor. Personally and financially, they were poor men ; but they were enriching many with the best of all riches. So the last of these clauses ;—"as having nothing," and yet possessing all things ; really pennyless ; but who ever had such treasures as they ? Paul carried in his soul a precious sense of being rich,—for was not God his own Father, and heaven his own inheritance, and himself just on the point of entering upon its everlasting possession ?—The whole passage is instinct with living thought expressed with telling force.

11. O *ye* Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

12. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

13. Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto *my* children,) be ye also enlarged.

No wonder Paul had a sense of an open mouth and a full bursting heart, as these great facts of his life-experience came swelling up and demanding utterance. Ye are in no wise straitened in us ; friends of larger heart and richer love, ye have never had :—O might your own heart be enlarged as much and warmed as deeply ! If there be straitness any where, it is in your souls—not in ours. Now as a compensation to us for all our outpourings of love and labor, I beg you to let your hearts be enlarged ; for ye are truly my children, and I must plead with you as such.

14. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ?

15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ?

16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them* ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

All this bears against intimate association with idolaters —one of the chief dangers incident to their christian life.—“Unequally yoked” as when the husbandman yokes ox and ass together. Never subject yourselves to such unsuitable yoking with unbelievers. The question of interpretation here will be whether this has special reference to the marriage relation, or rather, an unrestricted application to social and business life generally. The latter corresponds best with the strain of the whole passage, particularly with the exhortation (v. 17) ; “Come out from among them and be ye separate” *etc.* The spirit of the passage would forbid unequal yoking in the marriage relation much more (“*a fortiori*”). If in the ordinary associations of life, they ought to beware of dangerous intimacies with idolaters ;

then surely intermarriage between believers and idolaters could by no means be tolerated.

Note the argument ;—What holding and sharing in common can there be between righteousness and unrighteousness ? What communion of light with darkness ? What harmony of Christ with Belial ? What part, or share, can a believer have with an infidel ? What agreement [coöperation] has the temple of God with idols ?—This last is a specially pertinent question ; for ye are truly the temple of the living God, inasmuch as God himself has said—“I will dwell in them and walk in them ; *i.e.* will act, energize ; be a living power within their souls.” I will be a God to them, and they shall be a people for me.—Of these things, both the thought and the phrase had come down from the ancient theocratic life of Israel, reproduced in the old prophets with exceeding richness of promise. In Moses (Lev. 26, 11, 12,) we read ; “I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”—Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord not only repeated this promise, but sent it onward into the gospel age with fresh sanction :—“The days come that I will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah : I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their heart ; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”—Now with such a Presence in their souls, shall they invite into the same temple of their conscious heart, Belial and idol-worshipping men ! Shall they experiment to mix darkness with this light ; foulness with this purity ; sin with this righteousness ? Could they not see how utterly incongruous this would be—how practically impossible ? For God will never be a party in such experimenting. The moment they open their heart to Belial, the Spirit of God is gone !

The great moral force of this appeal lies in the utter and inevitable antagonism between these opposites. Fellowship, communion, concord, coöperation, between the Spirit of God and the spirit of sin, are never to be thought of as possible.

17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing* ; and I will receive you,

18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

“Wherefore”—(what reasoning can be stronger?) “wherefore, come out from among them,”—from the houses, the society, the sympathies of idol-worshipping men and women; and be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing; so I will receive you; so I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters.—Full of moral force is the name given to Him who makes these promises—“the Lord Almighty.” Think of such a Father—of such a Promiser—of such an everlasting Friend! Could ye not well afford to forego all other friends, associates, companions, for the sake of him—all human love for his?



CHAPTER VII.

IN thought, v. 1, belongs at the close of Chapter 6,—an exhortation founded upon the great truths and promises presented there. The rest of the chapter resumes and discusses more fully the theme introduced in Chapter 2, *viz.*, the return of Titus from Corinth; the welcome tidings he brought of the successful issue of that fearful case of discipline; and the great comfort and joy which these tidings brought to the long afflicted heart of the Great Apostle.

1. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

“Cleanse ourselves,” gives prominence to man’s personal agency and responsibility in his own sanctification; yet not at all beyond the truth of the case. In this connection with God’s exceeding great and rich promises, there could be no special danger of over-emphasizing man’s agency or of understating the agency of the Divine Spirit—God dwelling and energizing in human souls. It is because God’s energy is such a present fact and living power in our souls that we are exhorted to *work* together

with him ; to cleanse ourselves that the heart may be a fit temple for his abode.—This is Paul's way of putting the co-ordinate agencies of God and man ;—“ Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” (Phil. 2: 12, 13). The word “cleanse” is well chosen here, with reference to “ Touch not the unclean thing” (6: 17), and with obvious allusion to the ancient temple in which God's apartment—the Most Holy Place—could never endure the least pollution.

Of course the word is here transferred from its physical to its corresponding moral and spiritual sense—in which sin is the only pollution. It matters little what else may be in our thought and heart, if there be *no sin there*.

“ Filthiness of flesh and spirit ” does not assume that sin can be precisely *in flesh*, in such a sense that the spirit has no responsibility for it. The distinction looks only to the divers sources of the temptation which comes *before* the sin—some of these temptations being in flesh and some in spirit. The real sin is always in the spirit—the voluntary action of man's will or soul.

“ Perfecting holiness ” certainly assumes that nothing less than perfect holiness should ever satisfy our aspirations or measure our aims and endeavors. Never a sin of any sort is to be tolerated ; never a lust left unslain ; never an evil passion allowed to live. Every thought must be brought into captivity to the law of Christ ; every activity be shaped and molded into love and loving service for God and for our generation according to the will of God. The theory that some lower standard of Christian life than this from Paul, is at all admissible, is one of the most ruinous heresies that ever cursed the church, or imperilled human souls. To interpret Paul's words to mean only this :—Cleanse yourselves from a part [rather than all] of the filthiness of your flesh and spirit—is an outrage on his words and on his teaching. And to break the force of his exhortation by saying that though perfection is the rule and the law, yet it is, for the present life, impossible, and therefore not be expected or aimed at, and that the hope of it is a dangerous heresy—is scarcely more defensible. Why not let the exhortation and precept of Christ through his inspired servants come home to our heart with all their inspiring, uplifting power ?

2. Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

3. I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*.

“Receive us” in love and confidence, giving us a place in your very heart. We have done nothing to forfeit your confidence or your esteem. We have wronged no man: we have corrupted no man—*i. e.* in the moral sense of depraving his morals or debasing his character. “We have defrauded no man” may perhaps refer to taking his money for our support. In fact that hostile faction in Corinth were so mean and suspicious that Paul always refused to receive a penny from them toward his necessary bread.—“I speak not this to condemn you”—though it may seem to you to mean this, at least by implication.—“That ye are in our heart to live and die with you,” is beautifully strong in Paul’s original words—which say—Ye are in our heart *unto the extent* of dying and living with you. The love of our souls for you has knit our interests and destinies so perfectly with yours that we shall live or die together. Your life is life to us; your death would be our death.

4. Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

5. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

It seems hard for Paul to express fully the exuberance of his joy upon the coming of Titus with so good news from Corinth. “I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation” means—I am overflowing with joy, not merely *in* but *upon* our tribulation—as if it were a joy that comes over upon and quite eclipses them all.—That was a dark day in our life history when we came into Macedonia, expecting to find Titus there but found him not. Our flesh had no rest. Without *were* fightings *i. e.* of bitter persecutions: within *were* fears, of the issue at Corinth.

6. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus:

7. And not by his coming only, but by the consola-

tion wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me ; so that I rejoiced the more.

8. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent : for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

It was specially beautiful that Paul should first describe the Giver of his consolations as *the One* who comforteth the lowly and depressed, before he gives his name, God ; for this is his way of putting it. But He who comforteth the lowly comforted us, even God, by the coming of Titus.—In the middle clause of v. 7. our auth. version “*when he told us,*” would be more accurate if read—“*who told us,*” Paul’s words being precisely—“*telling us your strong feeling*” etc. The idea is not that Titus was specially consoled *when he told us of you*, but that we were made glad, both by his coming, by the comfort he had in you, and not least by the tidings he brought as to your strong feeling, your sorrow over the case and your fervent mind in my behalf —*i. e.*, for my relief : so that I rejoiced even more than I had been saddened before.—In the last clause of v. 8. there seems to be a suppressed clause to be supplied in order to bring out in a natural way the full sense, making the entire verse read thus :—Because though I grieved you in the letter [first epistle], I do not repent though I did [for a time] repent ; for I see that that letter, though it saddened you for a time, *has done you great good*. Precisely these five words seem requisite to express easily his obvious meaning. The great delicacy of the subject may account for their omission just here.

Paul’s word here for “repent” is never used for gospel repentance but rather for a change of mind which presupposes great care and responsibility. Paul suggests that his anxiety for the result was at one time so great that he was almost sorry he had written, or at least, that he had written so stringently. His words indicate the great depth of his sensibilities over this case.

9. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance : for ye were made sorry

after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sad, but that this sadness wrought unto repentance—that it bore this precious fruit and result. This repentance [Greek] is the word every where in New Testament use for repentance unto salvation—that of the gospel in which the sinner turns to God with sorrow for his sin. “Ye were made sorry after a godly manner” (v. 9) does not refer to the way they were brought to this sorrow—with emphasis upon “made,” but to the *nature* of the sorrow. Paul’s phrase is—“that ye sorrowed *according to God* [kata Theon] in the sense that their sorrow was such as pleases God—a sorrow that comes of just views of sin as toward and against God.

The last clause of v. 9 puts the case very gently—the literal sense being—To the result of your receiving no harm from us in anything; but the real sense must be—so that ye have received great profit and nothing but profit in the end. This result, moreover, is put as God’s purpose in his providence and grace.

“For” (v. 10) introduces a more full explanation of the two kinds of sorrow—that which is according to God—the sort which comes from proper regard for God; working repentance unto salvation of which none ever have occasion to repent: but over against this—the sorrow which has only the world in its eye—which cares only for man’s esteem, for social standing, for personal reputation (a sorrow which is sometimes mistaken for real conviction of sin and true repentance)—this works only death. The man is troubled only because his sin proved to be a blunder and brought upon him some worldly damage which he exceedingly desires to repair. Why should he deceive himself with the notion that such sorrow is pleasing to God?

Then, (v. 11) Paul calls their attention to the fruits of their godly sorrow—to note what earnest diligence [to set things right] ; what clearing of yourselves [not, however, by apologizing for the sin but by putting it away] ; what indignation against wrong doing ; what godly fear of evil consequences [in the line perhaps of pestiferous influences] ; what longing desire, zeal and revenge—as if they could not rest, and were ready to punish themselves by self-imposed retribution. How earnestly did ye labor to clear yourselves of all further responsibility as to the great sin and scandal ?

The entire passage is a precious testimony to the good results of wholesome church discipline. It served to put scandalous sin within the church in its true light, and wrought a blessed repentance toward God for the wrong they had tolerated. Not least—perhaps best of all—it brought the offender to repentance.

And yet one more good result comes from this case ;—It serves to develop most beautifully the spirit of Paul in such matters—a noble example of the *heart* as well as the *hand* that should be manifested in church discipline by church officers and by all the membership.

12. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

13. Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

14. For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

15. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

“ His cause who suffered wrong ” is supposed to refer to the father whose wife left him and married the son.—The oldest manuscripts [S. V.—accepted by Tischendorf] make

the somewhat remarkable change—"your care for us," instead of "our care for you"—and which would imply that Paul's main purpose was to give that church an opportunity to show their warm affection and earnest spirit toward himself. In v. 13, the same authorities make the verse read ;—Therefore we were comforted ; but in addition to our comfort, we rejoiced much the more at the joy of Titus.

Paul's sympathy with Titus was strong and beautiful, and the testimony incidentally given here as to the character of Titus places him deservedly high in our esteem.

Throughout this chapter the developments of Christian character are really an oasis in the history of the church of Corinth.



C H A P T E R V I I I .

This chapter and the 9th treat exclusively of that collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem which interested Paul deeply and is spoken of in Rom. 15 : 26, 27 and Acts 24 : 17. Paul aims to stir up a generous emulation in this matter between the churches of Macedonia and those of Achaia (Corinth included) ; also to inspire them by the example of the Lord Jesus ; and by the gratitude and thanksgiving which their benefactions were calling forth to the result of richer communion and fellowship among the churches, and higher glory to God.

1. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia ;

2. How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3. For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves ;

4. Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

The obsolete word "to wit" makes this translation very

infelicitons. What Paul said means only—“We make known to you, brethren, the grace of God,” etc.—Noticeably that word “grace”—most prolific in its various but rich senses—is here the Christian virtue of beneficence—a free and joyous spirit of *giving* to the extent of real sacrifice.

We desire (says Paul) to tell you—ye brethren of Corinth how greatly the Lord blessed the churches of Macedonia with this “grace.” For under a very severe trial of persecution, the fullness of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality *i. e.* conduced to make them rich and joyful in the spirit and the love of giving. For I can testify for them that according to their ability—yea, even beyond their ability, they were self-moved, entreating us with much exhortation for the privilege of sharing in this ministry in behalf of the poor saints.—Our Auth. version misses the sense of v. 4, very materially, their mistake being due in part to an erroneous text—the earlier manuscripts, recently brought into use, rejecting the words—“that we would receive.” Instead, therefore, of reading the verse—“Praying us to receive their gift and undertake the appropriation of it to the use of the saints,” the verse should read—“Begging of us, with much entreaty,” the privilege of giving [literally “the grace”] and the sharing in this ministry for the saints. They felt it to be a privilege of which they could not be denied.

Of those churches of Macedonia, Philippi and Thessalonica are best known. We may assume another at Berea, and doubtless yet others, not specially named in our New Testament.—Of their trials from persecution we have some notice in Acts 16:20 and 17:5; also 1 Thess. 1:6 and 2:14.

5. And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

6. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

7. Therefore, as ye abound in *everything*, in faith, and utterance and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

Not merely up to the measure we had hoped, but (he assumes) much beyond it. For they began with giving themselves wholly to the Lord—altogether the most vital thing and therefore the very place to begin, and the real secret of their munificent liberality. Paul's word means not so much first in time as first in value.—Their grand example moved us to exhort Titus to resume and carry through the collection among yourselves—“finish the same “grace” *i. e.* the grace of free-hearted liberality.

8. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10. And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11. Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have.

12. For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

In v. 8 we have another case of Paul's careful discrimination between what he wrote under special command from God, and what he suggested as his own personal judgment and opinion. In this case he was moved by the inspiring example of those churches of Macedonia. He also wished to prove the genuineness of their love, there in Corinth.

Always pertinent as a motive for Christian liberality is the example of our incarnate Redeemer. Who so rich as he in all the glories of heaven; yet how did he empty himself, disrobe himself of all the honors and the wealth of heaven, and become so very poor upon earth that he “had not where to lay his head!” Was ever such *giving* as his for us! Were hopeless poor ones ever so enriched as his people have been by his benefactions! Why then shall not his example burn in our souls until like those Macedonian Churches, we beg the privilege of giving and

account it as our richest boon to share the joy of giving for Him who has given us the riches of heaven?—In v. 10, last clause, the Greek word for “to be forward,” means precisely—*to will*—to have the purpose and heart to do.—The striking point in this phrase is, therefore, that the doing seems to come before the willing, and the willing, to be a higher virtue or attainment. Whereas in our philosophy we assume the willing to come before the doing. How is this?

Bengel explains—Ready not only to do for this year, but to plan and to will for another annual collection.—Our Auth. version explains by putting special emphasis upon “the willing,” in the sense of extraordinary promptness, activity.—I judge that Bengel approximates the true meaning, *viz.* that a year ago, they not only began to take up collections; but to *will* and to *plan* to continue them weekly for the year ensuing, so as to be ready with yet another large contribution. In this sense the *willing* was a yet additional and higher fact than the first *doing* in the way of beginning the collection.—What follows corresponds with this: Now, therefore, finish the doing, that as there has been a promptness of willing, planning, so there shall be the execution, the finishing, according to your ability—literally, according to your having—to what ye have.—For the willing mind being supposed—being a fact—then the gift is acceptable to God, measured by what he has and not by what he does not possess. God never asks the poor man to give according to what would be the right scale for the rich, for this would measure him by what he has not.

13. For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened.

14. But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundancee *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want; that there may be equality:

15. As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over: and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.

Literally, not that there should be relief to others and

burden on you ; but according to equality—each in due proportion to his ability.

16. But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

17. For indeed he accepted the exhortation ; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18. And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches ;

19. And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration* of your ready mind :

The same earnest cares for you which I have felt myself.—For on the one hand he accepted the exhortation (*i.e.* from me) ; and on the other, being more eager than to need any exhortation, he went of his own motion, of self-choice—as Paul's word says.

“The brother” (v. 18), sent with him, “whose praise in the gospel is throughout all the churches,” is generally and quite reasonably assumed to have been Luke. The circumstances which conspire to make this highly probable are of this sort. The character given him by Paul (Col. 4: 14),—“Luke the beloved physician,”—corresponds well with the point put here—“Whose praise in the gospel is in all the churches.”—The residence and labors of Luke for many years were in Macedonia, near or at Phillipi, where the record (Acts 16: 10-16), shows him to have been with Paul, but left there, or at least, not with Paul again till the notice (Acts 20: 5), from which time he was with Paul till he reached Rome a prisoner. That is to say, he was with Paul in Macedonia when he wrote this second epistle to Corinth, and fulfilled this commission to visit Corinth in person to gather up those collections and take them in company with Paul to Jerusalem.—Yet further, quite ancient tradition, appearing in the subscription to this epistle, sets forth that it was sent by the hands of Titus and Luke.—In v. 19, Paul says that this brother (Luke) was designated by the churches (*i.e.* of Macedonia), to travel with Paul to Jerusalem in charge of their collection—which Paul calls “this grace,” a beneficence which comes of the grace of God's Spirit, and has therefore the

elements of grace in it.—In the last clause of v. 19, the better authorities say, not “your” but *our* ready mind.

20. Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21. Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now how much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

23. Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow helper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of*, *they are* the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

24. Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

Paul had obvious reasons for declining all charge of this collection, and for insisting that the churches themselves appoint brethren for this purpose, well known and universally esteemed. It was not that his own character was shaky or his good name under any reasonable suspicion; but mainly because there were ill-disposed men eager to seize upon any thing that might bring him into dispute. Knowing their attitude, he purposely blocked their design.—In v. 21, the word “honest” translates Paul’s word quite imperfectly. He means—forethoughtfully guarding against suspicion; providing such safeguards as must shield our Christian reputation. His Greek word for “honest” [kala], has no exact equivalent. Honorable, approximates its sense; that which cannot be aspersed, which defies defamation, comes yet nearer to its significance.

This second brother (v. 22), is not easily identified;—probably some one of those whose names appear in Acts 20: 4, as Paul’s fellow travellers on this journey to Jerusalem; but which of them is not known.

These brethren were entirely worthy of confidence. Therefore he exhorts the brethren at Corinth to receive them and give them proof of their love, and duly honor these testimonials from Paul.

CHAPTER IX.

THE subject of Chapter VIII is continued and completed.

1. For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

2. For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

3. Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:

4. Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

“Superfluous,” because of the zeal ye have already shown. Paul has no scruples against commanding what was commendable.—Yet he had just a little fear that their collection might not be all in readiness, and therefore sent the brethren above referred to, and wrote them in advance lest on their arrival, things should be behindhand. Having spoken so highly of them, almost to the point of boasting, he would be ashamed of such a result;—perhaps they ought to be also. But in the last clause of v. 4, the better text omits the word “boasting,” leaving it thus;—“Ashamed in this matter,” i.e., ashamed that I had assumed too much.

5. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness.

“Make up beforehand your bounty,” does not mean that they themselves were to make good any deficiency; but only that they stir up the brethren there to put it in readiness. Translate;—That they go forward to you and get in readiness your benefaction [collection] before promised—i.e. by myself to the churches of Macedonia—that it may

be ready as a blessing from your heart, and not as if wrung out of your covetous souls. In the sight of God, this difference is everything.

6. But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

“ But this,” consider well ; note carefully. Paul leaves the admonition for them to supply.

As the sowing, so shall the reaping be (Gal. 6: 7). He that sows with the blessing from his own heart shall reap with the blessing from God’s heart. Paul’s chosen words mean all this.

Let each man give out of the choice of his heart ; not of grief or of compulsion, as if under the strain of social pressure, to keep up his social standing, yet sad and driven quite against his preference, and quite apart from any love in his heart. God loves a cheerful giver—one who himself loves to give.

8. And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work :

9. (As it is written, He has dispersed abroad ; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

10. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness :)

11. Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

God is very able to give bountifully—both of his grace and of his good providence, to those who give bountifully for his cause. Thus those who begin with liberal giving, shall have means for giving yet more liberally.

The quotation (from Ps. 112: 9), is entirely in point. This “ he ” is not God but the liberal man—the whole strain of the Psalm describing his overflowing benefactions.

In v. 10, the older textual authorities have the simple future and not the optative, *i.e.* making it a prediction, not a prayer. Our auth. version misplaces the second clause ("minister bread for your food") for the verse should read, "He who ministers seed for the sower and bread for food, will minister and will multiply your seed, and will increase the product of your righteousness," or rather, of your rightness [your generosity.]

Vs. 9, 10, being a parenthesis, v. 11 is connected grammatically with v. 8, "That ye may abound in every good work," "being enriched in everything," etc.

12. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

13. While by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*;

14. And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

15. Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Noticeably, one precious result of these charitable contributions for the poor—one in which Paul rejoices exceedingly—is that it abounds in many thanksgivings to God. Grateful hearts remember God as the ultimate source of their blessings, and God himself receives honor and praise for his manifested love toward his poor.

In v. 13 our Auth. version is not very lucid. The real sense is too good to be obscured;—thus: (in connection with v. 12) This liberal collection not only supplies the wants of the saints but causes many thanksgivings to God—(v. 13) They glorifying God by occasion of the proof furnished in this ministration, of your professed subjection to the gospel of Christ; and by their prayer for you (v. 14), they having an ardent affection for you because of the superabounding grace of God upon you.

In this closing outburst of gratitude (v. 15), it seems to be the view of some critics that Paul thought only of God's gifts in his grace and in his providence, to which reference has been made (*e. g.* in v. 8).—The better view is that those gifts of God were suggestive of the one supreme, far

greater gift of his own “well beloved Son.” This accounts for the use of the singular—*gift*; whereas if the allusion were to God’s manifold gifts of providence and of grace as above, it should be plural. Then, moreover, the epithet, “unspeakable”—one that cannot be unfolded—can never be fully told—places this one purposely above all the previously mentioned and lesser gifts of God.



CHAPTER X.

THIS chapter is occupied throughout with Paul’s vindication of himself against the party in Corinth who decried his good name; disparaged his labors and questioned his Apostolic authority—not to say, his Christian character. There is no reason to doubt that this party was composed of subtle, probably godless, Jews, who at heart hated Paul in the spirit of Jewish prejudice, because of his devotion to the Gentiles and of his sturdy opposition to their national pride and exclusiveness. Of course there could be no real sympathy between that party and Paul. Yet they had influence in Corinth, and appear to have made great pretensions to Christianity. It is even probable (from v. 7) that they were the party designated (1 Cor. 1 : 12) as saying—“I of Christ.”

1. Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:

2. But I beseech *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

In the first words—“I Paul myself,” he makes his personality emphatic. Writing out *ego* [I], and strengthening it by *autos* [self] make a very strong emphasis. Paul meant to say—I come now for a plain, personal talk. I put myself in a beseeching, imploring attitude: I beg you to hear me, for a little, patiently.

“By the meekness and gentleness of Christ;”—Shall

this be taken as a form of adjuration, or rather with this meaning—In view of the meekness and gentleness of Christ? The latter is the better construction.—I beseech you as in the presence of all Christ's own meekness and gentleness. Ye profess to honor Christ; think then of his Spirit, and let it be a presence and a power in your hearts.—I Paul, who (as ye are wont to say) am in personal presence very insignificant, though when absent, quite bold toward you.—I judge that in this last clause, Paul is not so much giving his own estimate of himself, as their way of talking about him.

But (v. 2) I beg you not to compel me to be bold when present—[ye would find that I can be, and I have had occasion to think the matter over]. I am thinking I may be compelled to be bold against some who think we are walking *after the flesh*—*i. e.* with only godless, selfish aims.

3. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4. (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6. And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

For though walking *in* the flesh—mortal as other men, and indeed, encompassed with manifold infirmities of flesh, yet when we take up arms against Satan and sin and play the role of the Christian warrior, men will find that it is not done “according to the flesh” only—*i. e.* in the weakness of flesh and blood; “*for*” the weapons we fight with are not of flesh, but are mighty before God—exceeding mighty—unto the casting down of strong bulwarks, hurling down proud reasonings and every lofty thing that lifts up itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into obedience to Christ; and having [our forces] in readiness to punish every disobedience [rebellion], when your obedience is fully manifested.—This last clause means—We shall be ready to excommunicate and “deliver over

to Satan” every man who rebels against our apostolical authority when the number of the obedient is complete and fully manifested—*i. e.* so that the line shall be fully and unmistakably drawn between the obedient, and the proudly and persistently rebellious.

The phrase (v. 4)—“mighty through God” is probably a Hebraism—*mighty to God*—as Moses was said by Stephen (Acts 7: 20) to be *fair to God*—*i. e.* exceeding fair. So here, mighty, though estimated in the presence of the Almighty.

7. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s let him of himself think this again, that as he *is* Christ’s, even so *are* we Christ’s.

8. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

9. That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10. For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

11. Let such a one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent such *will be* also in deed when we are present.

Do ye look on things and judge from their face? It would seem so from the way ye disparage my “bodily presence.” But let us look at things more fundamental and more worthy of regard. If any one has confidence in himself that he belongs to Christ, giving his own party the honored designation—“we are of Christ,” (1 Cor. 1: 12) —let him in a manly way reason with himself thus—that as he is of Christ, so are we, with equal self-conscious evidence.—For (v. 8).—if I shall speak somewhat strongly of our apostolic authority which the Lord has given us for your edification and not for your destruction—[so intended, and so we shall rejoice to exercise it], I shall not be put to shame [*i. e.* by its failure in the hour of need]. I have no wish to terrify you [unduly] by my letters, nor would I *seem* to do it.—I understand (v. 10) how ye are wont to speak of my letters compared with my bodily presence.

Whoever would say that, let him know that if I am compelled to come in person, my deeds will be no less earnest and no less formidable than those written words.

12. For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

13. But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

14. For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you; for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:

15. Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labors; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

16. To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

17. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

18. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

This whole passage presupposes that Paul's enemies in Corinth had been deerring his gospel labors; perhaps setting forth that he had made a great splurge; had been vain of his success among the Gentiles, but had really done little compared [probably] with other Apostles laboring among Jews, or compared with themselves; and that his work was out of place in Corinth.—Paul replies that he did not perpetrate the folly of comparing himself with other men (as they did of themselves): that God had given him his field and had blessed him to do a great work; that God had helped him to bring this gospel even to Corinth and had fully brought this city within his great commission; that he hoped to go even to regions beyond—*i. e.* South and West; that he had never

entered into other men's labors and then assumed to himself the honor due to them for their work.—In v. 15, the phrase—“that we shall be enlarged by you”—is dark to the English reader—the sense of Paul's word being—that we shall be held in due honor—shall be magnified up to the measure of our actual doing. Paul hoped for this result on the supposition that their faith would be increased. If this should be the case, then they might be expected to give him due credit for his gospel labors.



CHAPTER XI.

THE distinctive word in this chapter is “folly”—its one theme being self-vindication ; to which Paul was pushed and even forced, entirely against his will and his nature, to an extent from which his whole soul recoiled. In seeming apology for this, yet often with keen irony he represents himself as playing the part of one half-demented. He might very properly have added this to the long catalogue of his apostolic sufferings and afflictions (v. 23–30)—that he had to deal with heartless, base, mean calumniators : that to withstand their calumny, he was forced to descend to self-vindication and self-praise from which his noble nature recoiled.—To this cruel compulsion, the christian world owes this wonderful record of Paul's sufferings and perils, much more minute than Luke has given in his Acts, or than appears elsewhere in the epistles.

1. Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly : and indeed bear with me.

The second clause is construed variously by critics ; some making it merely indicative ; others imperative ; *i.e.* some translating it :—Indeed ye do bear with me ; others, —Indeed, bear ye with me. The latter seems to me preferable—the sense being ; I wish ye might bear with some little folly from me :—indeed, I must beg you to do so. It is a hard case for me ; but for your sake I must enter upon self-vindication against my bitter opponents and traducers.

2. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy :

for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

3. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

4. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another Spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

This figure of espousing them as a pure virgin in holy wedlock to Christ is at once beautiful and strong—carrying out the thought of Ps. 45: and of the Song of Solomon—the church the bride, and Christ the bridegroom. But Paul fears for their moral purity. As the serpent beguiled Eve, so his minions may beguile them. Of this, there is real danger, “*for*” (v. 4), they are but too tolerant of men who bring another gospel—*i.e.* another Jesus; a different Holy Ghost; and an unlike gospel message.

The last clause of v. 4,—“Ye might well bear with him,” has several difficult points;—*e. g.* whether it be, or be not, irony; and whether it should read—“bear with him,” or “bear with me,” the original having neither, *i.e.* no pronoun at all.—Some critics read, Ye might well bear with *me*—*i.e.* if ye are so very liberal and charitable that ye receive with open arms a man who comes with another Jesus, another Spirit, and another gospel.—Others read it, Ye would bear with him and think it well to do so—this “well” being in irony, like those words of our Lord to the Pharisees (Mark 7: 9); “*Full well* do ye reject the commandments of God that ye may keep your own traditions!—That must be doing *well* for religious teachers!—So here; ye bear with such detestable men very graciously, very kindly, out of the great fulness of your Christian charity!—This I take to be Paul’s thought.—Then the logic of the next verse [gar] assumes this intermediate point:—If ye have such gracious charity for such despicable men, ye surely ought to be able to tolerate me, *for* I judge that I have fallen no whit behind or below those super-eminent apostles! This also is irony, and supposes Paul to call those men the very chief apostles—as they seem to have claimed to be!

5. For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chieftest apostles.

6. But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

As said already, v. 5 may very properly be taken to refer to those preachers of another gospel, who thought themselves of the very first order of apostles. This reference cannot be considered altogether certain; for Paul does not say *those* but *the* chief apostles. Yet irony is the order of the passage—rules much of the thought through many of these verses. Taken as irony, the words are sharp and telling. The very slight ambiguity consequent upon saying “*the*” rather than *those* or *these*, may have been intended.—Then (v. 6), As to myself, though I am unskilled in eloquent speech yet not in knowledge;—but we have made everything manifest before you, having no concealments; and therefore you must know perfectly what we are. The older textual authorities—Tischendorf concurring—have the active and not the passive voice;—“we having made everything manifest before you,”—instead of, “being made thoroughly manifest.” The difference is only that they purposely disclosed everything;—kept back nothing;—lived out their very selves and all their heart before the open eyes of all Corinth. In this respect Paul puts himself in contrast with his traducers.

7. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

8. I robbed other churches, taking wages of *them*, to do you service.

9. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

10. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

Literally—Have I committed sin against you, in humbling myself that ye might be exalted—in the point of

preaching to you the gospel without charge?—As to the humiliation of working at tents, it is said on historical grounds that, presumably, Paul's fellow-workmen in the shop of Priscilla and Aquilla were slaves.—The notion that such self-support was a sin against them is slightly ironical. Are ye so unreasonable as to claim that I sinned against you in that self-support?—They probably said that Paul was conscious of being an inferior apostle, and therefore, of having no claim on the church for his support. In v. 9, “chargeable to no man,” is precisely—I made myself a burden upon no one; literally, I did not squat down upon him; put myself flat upon him.—Paul solemnly declares—no man shall stop me from this boasting—the original reading thus; This boasting shall not be shut against me—*i.e.* by stopping my mouth. Thus the church at Corinth has gone upon record, and passed down into history, so distinguished for its jealousy and its meanness that Paul could not safely, with due self-respect and regard to his apostolic influence, accept from them a picayune to meet the cost of his daily bread. He was compelled to forego all those sweet reciprocities of mutual labor in mutual confidence and fellowship—the common giving and receiving in which one serves in spiritual things and the other in temporal. Such noble reciprocity assumes mutual confidence and affection; but alas, Paul knew but too well that his love and service for them were not reciprocated—at least, were not by all the church; and the exceptional cases ruled the hour and shut off the great apostle from partaking of even a morsel of their bread.

“As the truth of Christ is in me,” is a form of solemn adjuration. Its appearance here bears witness to the intensity of Paul's feelings, and to his painful suspicion of their confidence in his veracity.

11. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

12. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

V. 12 is difficult. But this is the line of thought;—I will continue to do what I have hitherto done—*i.e.* take not a penny from Corinth for my living;—that I may

ent off the occasion from those who are eager to seize it :—But the occasion to do what ? Either to vilify Paul as a covetous money-loving apostle ; or the occasion to plead his example in defense of their own heavy drafts upon the church for themselves. It is quite certain that they drew heavily upon the treasury of the church (see v. 20) ; and very naturally were galled by this peculiar example of Paul, in such contrast with their practice.—Yet what the point was in which they gloried (“that wherein they glory,”) is not altogether clear. Probably it was in being Apostles of the first order, quite above Paul. But Paul may here quietly suggest that if they wish to make good their claim to such glory, they would do well to manifest the proof by such self-sacrifice as he himself had shown.—That they may get no advantage over me in the point of their vaunted superiority ; but may find that high reputation must have a worthy life to rest on.

13. For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14. And no marvel ; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness ; whose end shall be according to their works.

The first word “*for*” assumes that those enemies of Paul were struggling for a reputation and standing, of which they were utterly unworthy, and which it ought to be hard work for them to gain ;—*for* they were really a great cheat—“false apostles”—putting on the stolen garb of apostles and saints—at which we need not be surprised, for Satan does the same thing. Why, then, should not his ministers follow their Master ?—This is very plain speech for Paul—wrung from him doubtless, by the painful conviction of its truth and of the vital importance of bearing his solemn testimony against them.

16. I say again, Let no man think me a fool ; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.

17. That which I speak, I speak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

18. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also,

19. For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise.

20. For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

Forced again to self-commendation, he begs a hearing. If ye, men of Corinth, therefore, suspect me of being partially demented, yet hear me as such that I may boast of myself a little.—Observe, I claim no word from the Lord in what I am now to say. It is simply self-commendation, which I would gladly omit if I could.—Then in irony Paul pleads ;—Ye indulge half idiotic men to have their say, seeing ye have (perhaps all the more for having) a very comfortable self-consciousness of being wise yourselves.—Ye are very indulgent toward these false apostles (my virulent traducers) ; ye bear it without flinching, though they enslave you ; devour your substance ; take what they will ; make great personal display ; smite you in the face.

21. I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

The first clause is obscure. The best construction, in my view, is this : I speak to your dishonor—how that we (when with you) were weak—quite too weak to do such things ! Ye may have thought us weak. We glory in being too weak for such scandalous ways as theirs !

But in the points wherein they make very bold pretensions, I have at least equal grounds—(though it may seem to you foolish for me to say it).

22. Are they Hebrews ? so *am* I. Are they Israelites ? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham ? so *am* I.

23. Are they ministers of Christ ? (I speak as a fool,) I *am* more ; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft.

24. Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

25. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26. *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* peril by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

It becomes quite clear that Paul's traducers at Corinth were Jews, and that they made great account of their pedigree.—

The Jews seem not only to have instigated but inflicted the persecutions and punishments under which Paul suffered. Stripes and stoning were certainly Jewish modes of punishment; “beating with rods” may have been Roman. The “forty stripes save one” were inflicted by thirteen blows of a triple lash. The Jewish law is in Deut. 25: 3.

This wonderful grouping of Paul's life-experiences in missionary hardships, privations, persecutions and perils, is grandly drawn, and tremendously forcible as against his vilifiers who manifestly had never the least item of such a record to show.

As already said, the history elsewhere in the Acts and Epistles touches a few of these historic facts, yet a few only. The reticence of Luke and of Paul generally in his epistles is beautifully modest; far as need be from making any display of hardship, or of fortitude:—content to wait for the reward of such heroism till the Master himself shall say, “Well done !”

28. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30. If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

The translation—“besides those things that are without”—must be changed to this:—“Apart from the things besides”—is the pressure upon me daily—the care of all the churches.”—The word for “pressure” seems to suggest a mob—the assaults of violent men (as in Aets 24: 12)—yet against this precise sense here lies the great improbability that Paul would speak of this as occurring daily. Then in favor of putting the word “care” in apposition with this “assault” is the absence of any connection to connect the two words as distinct ideas. Our Auth. version is therefore probably right in assuming that this word denotes an onrushing crowd of cares.

The epistles have often manifested in a quiet incidental way the weight of these burdens of care, and the quick, outgushing sympathies of Paul’s heart with every weak or endangered brother.

32. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:

33. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

His mind having rapidly traversed his whole life history of perils and labors, recurs naturally not to the last but to the first in the long series—one which gave him his first taste of life-perils, and which, perhaps, made a more vivid and enduring impression than any other—that at Damascus (Acts 9: 23-25). From a house built on the city wall (see Josh. 2: 15), and through a window in its wall front, he is let down in a rope-basket, and so makes his first escape with life.

CHAPTER XII.

THE striking feature of this chapter is the heavenly revelations made to Paul (v. 1-12).—As to Paul’s object in narrating them, it falls into the general current of the contiguous chapters—self-sustaining against the slanders and detractions of the hostile party in Corinth. Paul has

less repugnance to this part of his defence than to the recital of his labors or even sufferings, because in this, God was more prominent and man less. It was not pleasant for him to glory, but he might say a word of what the Lord had done for him.

1. It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

“Not expedient to push this line of defence too far lest there might be reaction. It might lead men to suspect him of vanity.—But visions and revelations, truly from the Lord, none could object to his briefly relating.—‘Visions’ and ‘revelations’ differ somewhat—visions being primarily things shown to the eye. The word ‘revelations’ is more broad and comprehensive; covering various methods of making unseen things known.

2. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.

3. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4. How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5. Of such a one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

Is this “man” Paul himself? Undoubtedly. Though v. 5, apparently makes this “such an one” distinct from “myself” [Paul], yet we must attribute this quasi distinction to modesty; for if this experience were that of somebody else and not of Paul, it would be utterly irrelevant here. Besides, v. 7 assumes absolutely that Paul was himself the subject of this trance. It was to obviate the possible danger of his being elated by the abundance of these revelations that “the thorn in the flesh” was permitted—which thorn was a very personal matter, in the flesh of Paul and not of some other man.

The words—“a man in Christ” must mean a man in closest sympathy and fellowship with Christ, living really *in* him as the sphere of his living.

The *time when*—“more than fourteen years ago”—was very early in Paul’s Christian life, and prior to the point where his Christian labors were fully recorded. If this epistle was written in A. D. 57, these visions were not later than A. D. 43—seven years prior to the great council at Jerusalem. They fall into the curriculum of Paul’s preparatory studies and preparation for his apostolic work.

Of the psychological condition of Paul under this experience, we cannot know much. He tells us very distinctly that he knew but little on this point himself. He did not even know whether he was in or out of the body—*i. e.* whether the body was caught up to heaven, or the soul only. But it manifestly seemed to him that his conscious spirit was transferred to Paradise.

On this question which may be pressed—whether this be not a mere vision brought to his mind as dreams are—the scenes coming down to him rather than himself taken up to the localities of the things themselves, we can only say that Paul’s description goes entirely against the supposition of a mere dream. He reiterates the point—“caught up to the third heaven;” “caught up to paradise,” and says it was there that he heard unspeakable words; also, his doubt whether he were in or out of the body assumes something very different from a mere vision transpiring within the mind.

The question not a little discussed among the early Fathers—whether Paul purposely distinguished between “the third heaven” (v. 3.) and “paradise” (v. 4), and whether he meant to say that these were two stages in this ascension;—the first, to the third heaven and the next and still higher one to paradise—it will scarcely profit us to push. Celestial geography is still, to us, an undeveloped science. Even if Paul meant to teach that the localities are two and not one and the same, he has added very little to our real knowledge. The probabilities, however, are very slight that he designed to make any distinction whatever. All the other words being essentially the same, (in v. 2 and v. 4), the presumption is in favor of a mere repetition for greater emphasis.

“Words not lawful for a man to utter.”—Does this mean—that man is by law forbidden to utter them; or, rather, that the uttering is impossible—*i. e.* to any purpose, since the words there spoken could not be intelligible?

gible to mortals?—The latter must be the sense, as interpreted by the “unspeakable words;” by the primary sense of Paul’s word*—a thing *out of being*—out of possibility: and finally, by the consideration that prohibition cannot be easily accounted for, while impracticability must be assumed.

Remarkably Paul says not a word of *seeing* any thing, but only of hearing words, which, however, he was perfectly conscious he could not report; perhaps also, could not even translate.—So that we learn from this passage very little indeed about the heavenly world. We learn that it is not only a *state* but a *place*, although of the relations of this place to other known points in the great universe of God, we are told nothing. Of things that he saw; of the time occupied in the transit; of the time he spent there; of distances in any respect—he reveals essentially nothing. He gives us to understand that there are things to be heard and learned there that cannot be reported, or otherwise made known here.—But on the whole it is certainly remarkable that upon the points above alluded to, Paul communicated so very little—so near to nothing at all.—We may, indeed we must, suppose that Paul learned more than he has reported here. Did it result from those heavenly revelations that he had those longings to be “clothed upon,” in the intermediate state, of which he speaks (2 Cor. 5: 1–5); and that he said with unfaltering assurance (as in 1 Cor. 13: 12). “Then shall I know even as also I am known?” However this may be, we will at least assume that he himself received impressions and definite conceptions of the blessedness of that state which became through all his future earthly life a loving inspiration to the utmost endeavor, pressing him onward to live as seeing things invisible. The church therefore gets the benefit of these revelations, not first but second hand;—not through what Paul reported directly, but through the inspiring impulses and the deathless energy which they imparted to his spirit and labors.—Of which, all we need say is—So God would have it. It is of small use to us to wish it had been otherwise. The Lord understands best how closely to shut his people up to walking by faith, not by sight.

*(Exon from exesti.)

Of one who has had such experiences (v. 5) he might speak as greatly distinguished ; but of myself (says Paul, putting himself in this quasi contrast with the man of such revelations), I will glory in nothing save my infirmities. This is delicate ground to tread, and Paul touches it with inimitable tact—the demand for self-vindication pushing him sternly forward ; but his modesty and the extreme delicacy of self-praise under any circumstances, holding him back.

6. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool ; for I will say the truth : but *now* I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me.

Nor though I should wish [*will* is his word]—to boast of myself, I shall not be a fool, *for* I shall speak only the truth, and only *such* truth as the case seems to compel me to speak ; but even so, I forbear, lest any one should judge of me above what he sees in me or hears from me. I wish no man to estimate me above what I prove myself to be before his eyes.

7. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Precisely what this “thorn in the flesh” was, Paul has not seen fit to divulge.. Some one has said that if the case had been narrated by Luke, the physician, his medical knowledge might have led (or betrayed) him into such descriptive terms as would have disclosed the secret. But Paul did not care to give to all the world the particulars of this infirmity. It was certainly physical (“in the flesh”); it was an infirmity (v. 9) ; it was an annoyance as painful infirmities in the flesh are wont to be : it was doubtless keenly painful; the chosen word “thorn” sufficiently shows this. No doubt it embarrassed his labors ; so that, for this reason, he would feel justified in praying to the Lord to take it away.

Paul’s reserve in defining it has been a sore annoyance to many critics. But no censure should be passed upon Paul for this ;—for what sensible man ever thinks it his

duty to let all mankind know what infirmities he has in the flesh ?

Very remarkable is the intimation of Satanic agency in this visitation ;—“a messenger” [angel] “of Satan”—something sent by him. This fact is entirely in harmony with other scriptural representations of Satanic power over mortals—when he has permission—as in the case of Job ; the case of demoniacal possessions ; and to name no other, the case of the excommunicate—“delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh” (1 Cor. 5 : 5).

The Satanic spirit is never slow to spring into any such opportunity to inflict sufferings. To harass and torment such a man as Paul, we may suppose to have been specially gratifying to his hellish malice. When in fact, it resulted in making Paul a holier and mightier man, it only afforded another example under the universal law—that the wrath of Satan and of his minions always works out God’s praise.

Paul understood—if not at first, yet ultimately—that God’s purpose in permitting this thorn in his flesh was to forestall undue elation and pride in consequence of these abundant revelations. God saw danger doubtless, of which Paul was not at the time aware ; and therefore, as a kind friend, provided this remedy—painful in the flesh, but most wholesome to the spirit—as Paul shows in the sequel.

8. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong.

While we have no reason to blame Paul for his reticence as to the physical ailment [“thorn”], we have the utmost reason to thank him for his frankness in recording so fully the spiritual processes by which God brought so much good out of that sore evil.—First, it threw him upon prayer, that the Lord would take it away. It is noticeable that Paul remembered, all through those fourteen years, how many times he had besought the Lord for this

relief. Prayer with him was not made up of “vain repetitions”—in which no man can tell how many times he has prayed for any one thing [unless he kept the count on a string of beads]. Other Christians besides Romanists are liable to make so little of prayer that it would be quite impossible for them to remember any real struggle of soul, or season of conscious admission into the audience of the Most High.—But Paul knew that he had prayed three times, very definitely, and doubtless very earnestly, with such consciously near approach to God that he felt it to be prayer. Then, apparently not till after the third time, the Lord answered, (answered once for all, the tense of Paul’s word—“he has said it”—implying a final, standing reply); My grace is sufficient for thee; for the power [so the better textual authorities (S. V. A.) have it] *the power* is perfectly developed, only in weakness;—*i. e.* only under the conditions, in the state, of human weakness.—“*The power*” is here the well known power of God which bears special, peculiar relations to man’s weakness. It is when man is consciously weak that this power becomes most fully manifest to the human consciousness and takes most precious effect in sustaining the otherwise sinking soul.

Therefore Paul declares—Most joyfully will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may overshadow—overspread me as a tent; come down upon me as an enveloping presence [as his Greek work suggests]. This thought may well bear to be repeated and expanded:—Therefore I am well pleased with [in and under] infirmities, reproaches *etc.*—for Paul proposes to extend this blessed doctrine to every sort of human infirmity, burden, strait, trial, peril;—to inspire his readers to make a personal application of it to all possible diversities of condition. Anything, everything, I may have to bear for Christ shall be borne joyfully, and even thankfully, for when I am weak, [in myself], then am I mighty [in Christ]. The more my own strength seems to go out of me, the more conscious shall I become of being filled with Christ. This is Christian experience. Paul puts in no exclusive claim to it; but on the contrary, very plainly opens the doctrine for every Christian’s personal use.

It may not be amiss to suggest, moreover, that the very indefiniteness of Paul’s “thorn” leaves the way open for

every Christian under any and every possible infirmity, to say of himself ;—This is my thorn in the flesh. With the utmost propriety I can put myself in the case of Paul. If he had said definitely—There was sent upon me for a thorn in my flesh sore eyes (as some have supposed), or the tooth-ache, then it might seem plausible to think of Christ's promise as good for that special sort of thorn, and perhaps a little uncertain as to any other sort. But now the case of Paul is left open to be applied to every possible infirmity. I may take its promise as my own against every pain I feel or burden I have to bear.

11. I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me : for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

12. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

13. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong.

Paul returns to the subject of his enforced self-commendation. He is aware it may seem to them very foolish; but let them consider—they have forced him to it. The necessity has been keenly painful. They ought to have defended him against his calumniators; and so have relieved him of this necessity. All the miraculous signs which endorse a genuine apostleship, he had wrought before their eyes, as they very well knew. Why then did they allow his enemies to impeach his apostolic commission?

Why had they not vindicated his apostleship in a way to confound his traducers and relieve Paul from this bitter necessity for self-vindication ?—It was the more reasonable for him to ask and to expect this from them because through his apostolic ministrations, their church had been pre-eminently blessed with spiritual gifts. In fact they had fallen behind no other church in the affluence of these gifts, nor indeed in any privilege or distinction, unless it be in the point of having never been burdened to the amount of a picayune with his support. With keen irony, which he

doubtless hoped their dull sensibilities might feel, he adds ; —Forgive this wrong—this injustice [his word means].

14. Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you ; and I will not be burdensome to you : for I seek not yours, but you : for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you ; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

16. But be it so, I did not burden you : nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

I am ready now to come to you for the third time ; but I shall still refuse to take a penny from you for my support. I will never give occasion to my traducers to defame my character, as they would do if I were to lay myself open in any wise to their slanders.

The moral sentiment—"I seek not yours but you"—was from Paul's lips both nobly true and grandly sublime. He was not laboring for their money but for their souls. He could say this honestly, and not a man of them could gainsay it.—A wonderful record this, and a precious example in the spirit of it for all gospel ministers to follow !

But on the nature of his reasoning in this case—"for" the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children"—we must pause a moment to ask whether Paul really intends to go back upon his own doctrine that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and the gospel minister of his bread from his people ? On its face this seems like an argument to prove that the minister ought to support his people with bread and clothing, and not his people support him. But we should do violence to our own common sense and to Paul's common sense also if we were to assume this to be his honest meaning. Rather let us put this argument to the account of the irony which tinges the greater part of this discussion—as if he would say, Ye may perhaps think that this policy of yours toward me comes under the law of parents providing for their children. Ye need some skill and tact to make the worse appear the better reason :—I give you this gratis !—It is perhaps supposable that he meant to suggest that he had been to them truly a father and had loved them as his chil-

dren, yet it were a pity they should abuse him for his parental love and self-sacrifice in their behalf !

In this line of thought he subjoins :—Truly I will most joyfully spend my strength and be utterly spent for your souls, [so is the Greek]. The last clause Tischendorf punctuates thus ;—If I shall love you more abundantly, shall I be the less loved ? Must I expect this—and must I bear it ? Is not this cruel and heartless ?

But be this so—as it may ; “I have not been burdensome to you”—said with emphasis upon I [for Paul wrote “ego” for emphasis]. However others may burden you, I am guiltless in this thing ; but being wily, I caught you with guile”—ironical again ;—I stole away from you that fine opportunity for scandal against me, which some of you were ready to seize ! Forgive me this *wrong* !

17. Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you ?

18. I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you ? walked we not in the same spirit ? *walked we* not in the same steps ?

Above reproach myself on the score of covetous exactions from you, will you say that I made Titus and his associates my tools for defrauding you ? Did they do any such things ? Not they.

19. Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you ? we speak before God in Christ : but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

20. For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not ; lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults :

21. *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

The better textual authorities have the first Greek word—not [palin] “again ;” but [palai] for a long time, or long ago. Read therefore, not interrogatively but affirmatively ;—ye have long been thinking that we were

apologizing to *you*. “We speak before God in Christ” [solemn asseveration]—“All these things, beloved, are not for our self-vindication but for your edification. Your spiritual good, not our reputation, has been our object. For I have great anxiety for you lest I shall not find you what I would, and lest ye should find me what ye will not enjoy. For I fear lest again when I come, I shall be humiliated among you by your scandalous sins, and that I shall find yet others who have grossly sinned and have not repented. Paul had been greatly comforted by the repentance of the incestuous man ; but he had painful fears that other sins of similar sort would be found among them yet unrepented of and not forsaken.



C H A P T E R X I I I .

THE central thought in this closing chapter is that when he shall come again, he shall use his apostolic authority with firmness and decision—not to say with unsparing severity. Flagrant sins must be put away.

1. This *is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

This allusion to the Mosaic law of testimony suggests very decisively that he purposes to make thorough investigation.

2. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time ; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare :

3. Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

4. For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

In the middle of v. 2 the corrected text omits the

words, “I write,” and puts the sentence in this form ;—“As when present the second time, and now when absent I have forewarned and now forewarn those who have previously sinned and all others, that if I come again *I shall not spare*. In as much as ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me—of *that* Christ who is not weak toward you but is mighty among you—ye shall have it.

In v. 4 a close analogy is drawn between the case of Christ and that of his apostles in the two points : first, weakness ; then strength : for (a) Christ was crucified in weakness [from or in consequence of weakness]—but lives by virtue of the power of God :—So likewise (b) we are weak in and with him ; but shall live with him by means [out of] the power of God toward you.

5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith : prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?

6. But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

Examine not us apostles, but your very selves, whether ye be truly “in the faith”—having true living faith in Christ.—Do ye not know yourselves [not in the sense know of yourselves] but do ye not know yourselves sufficiently to know that Christ Jesus is in you, except ye be reprobates? —“Reprobate” is in the sense of disapproved, disowned, rejected of God.

I trust ye shall know that we are not such. We shall labor to evince our fidelity to Christ before and toward you, when we come again.

7. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

8. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9. For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong : and this also we wish, *even* your perfection.

10. Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the

power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

But our great prayer to God is for your pure Christian life rather than for our own self-vindication. We pray that ye may do no evil thing, and we pray thus, not that we may appear approved, having a good record from your blameless life—*i. e.* we desire your purity for your own sake, and not for its bearing upon our reputation. We pray that ye may do all that is noble, even though we may seem to be reprobates.

In v. 8 we cannot interpret “truth” to mean truth in the abstract—*i. e.* true doctrine; but truth in the concrete, as developed in genuine Christian life. Paul therefore means—We can do nothing *against* but only *for*, and in behalf of, your upright, blameless life. This is our supreme purpose and endeavor.—The idea of truth, abstractly considered, would here be foreign from the subject of thought and remark.

We rejoice though we are weak if only ye are strong; and this is the burden of our prayer—your real perfection.

These things Paul writes in the hope of obviating the necessity of using severe measures of discipline and punishment when he comes in person.

11. Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

12. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13. All the saints salute you.

14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost *be* with you all. Amen.

¶ The second *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.

These farewell words are the outbreathing of a wise and noble, loving heart.

The better text omits the full period in v. 11, reading it—“As to the rest, rejoice; be perfect” [the object of his prayer as in v. 9]; “be comforted; be of one mind,” and not of many minds—jarring, conflicting, contending; live in peace and not in strife and bitterness. So shall the

God of love and peace be with you.—Let Christian salutations with the kiss of love be often given to each other.—All the saints with one accord send their salutation to you.

The closing doxology is a model of terseness and beauty; ever dear to the Christian heart through all the ages because of the equal honor it gives to the Son, to the Father and to the Spirit; imploring grace from the Son; love from the Father, the communion of fellowship from the Holy Ghost.—No name of Prophet or Apostle is here; counted into this sacred list; nor of Mary, the “holy mother;” nor even of Gabriel. The heart of Paul and of every New Testament saint would recoil from the blasphemy of putting any such name in this category, or indeed any other name save of these three; Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

We need not regard this verse as a formal argument by Paul to *prove* the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather its testimony for that doctrine comes in the sweet way of assuming its truth, and then interweaving it into the life-pulsations of the Christian soul—the sympathies of holy prayer and worship.

APPENDIX A.

ON PAUL'S USAGE OF THE TERM "LAW" IN CERTAIN PASSAGES WRITTEN TO THE ROMANS AND GALATIANS.

The laws of interpretation which legitimately control the sense and bearings of the passages referred to have been naturally developed in their place in the Commentary. But the importance of the themes involved; the sad misapprehensions as to them, not uncommon in our times, and their vital bearings upon christian experience, seem to justify a more extended discussion.—The running notes of a Commentary not affording the desired opportunity for presenting the subject in all its bearings, such opportunity is sought in the free scope of a special dissertation in the appendix.

The following are standard passages of the class referred to.

"Ye are not under the law but under grace." (Rom. 6: 14).

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." (Rom. 7: 4).

"But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held." (Rom. 7: 6).

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3: 28).

"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." (Gal. 2: 19).

"But if ye be led by the Spirit ye are not under the law." (Gal. 5: 18).

"Before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3: 23-25).

"Stand fast therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5: 1).

To read these passages even cursorily will suffice to suggest to most minds that evils have not unnaturally arisen from misconception of their true significance. To many, the question what the term "law" can mean here, has been seriously perplexing; while yet another class, rushing rashly upon a false interpretation, have suffered yet sadder evils than perplexity—perverting these passages to the result of dangerous errors.—Comprehensively, the mischiefs referred to have lain chiefly in these two directions; (a) Conscientious minds have been perplexed and confused because these passages have seemed to abrogate the present claims of the moral law.—(b) Minds not specially conscientious have by misinterpretation, perverted these passages to the extent of setting aside the claims of the moral law, assuming the gospel to be its sufficient and universal substitute, and so superseding all divine law as a rule of duty.

This general view of the evils that have arisen and are liable to arise from the misconception and abuse of these passages will suffice, I trust, to awaken interest in our proposed investigation. The gravity of the questions at issue and the greatness of the evils incident to misconception will justify an effort to reach an exposition which not only *may* be but *must* be the true one. We reach this certainty only as we build on valid principles of interpretation.

Hence it is well to approach the subject along this line of enquiry; *viz.* How came it to pass that Paul should speak of the "law" in this way? How can we account for these very peculiar forms of expression—these, apparently, very extraordinary statements? A just and full answer to these questions must suggest the true meaning of the Apostle.

Observe then, first: All these passages occur in the two epistles above named—that to the Romans, and that to the Galatians. No statements of this sort occur in any other epistles of Paul, nor in any other part of the New Testament. This fact should by itself afford the clew to their just exposition. For it leads us to enquire what there may have been in Rome and in Galatia that was peculiar. What peculiar people were resident there, having what peculiar notions as to law in its relations to the salvation of men?

These questions are readily answered. The people

specially addressed in Rome and in Galatia were Jews, either professedly christian converts from among the Jews, or at least men of Jewish faith and education who were accessible to the Apostle's instructions, whom his written words might reach, and to whom, therefore, he addressed himself, and consequently adjusted his argument, and to whose usage of religious terms he conformed himself in his statements.*

These Jews had certain notions or ideas peculiar to themselves which they comprehended under this term "law." Now it is entirely fundamental to our enquiry to ascertain what these peculiar ideas were. For there cannot be the least doubt that Paul uses this term *in their peculiar sense of it*. Addressing them, he adjusts his speech to their usage of terms. He must of necessity do this if he would be understood, and he must make himself understood if he would make his letters of any value whatever. There is no law of language more imperative

* While it is not vital to our argument, it may yet be a matter of interest and not without its value, to note certain diversities of tone and of argument observable when we compare Paul to the Romans with Paul to the Galatians. At Rome, the metropolis of the world, there had congregated a class of Jews cultured manifestly much above the average Jewish standard—men who said to Paul—"We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest;" and before whom, in response to this desire, Paul expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets from morning till evening" (Acts 28 : 22, 23). To such Jews, competent and ready to follow him into the great depths of revealed truth, he wrote those masterly expositions of the gospel scheme which appear in his epistle to the Romans, grappling with the profoundest problems of theological science as if pleasantly assured that his readers were capable and eager for such investigations. His tone is always respectful as of one aware that they held their religious views by virtue of life-long education; yet deeply earnest and affectionate, and probably we may say, *sympathetic*, for he manifestly thought of them as being what himself was through all his earlier years.

Quite otherwise is the tone of his expostulations and rebukes in his letter to the Galatians. Their Judaism seems not to have come to them so much through early education. It was rather inoculated into them by Judaizing emissaries whose spirit Paul abhorred and whose character he could not respect. His Galatian converts who had yielded weakly to their seductions, Paul deemed worthy of stern rebuke for that weakness and folly.

On the points to be specially discussed in our essay, Paul took essentially the same ground in these epistles and stated his views in mostly the same language.

and more absolutely universal than this—that the man who proposes to transmit his thought to other minds must use words which they will understand, and consequently, *in their sense of those words*. Paul, therefore, in addressing Jews at Rome or in Galatia, must have used the word "law" in this sense.

What was that peculiar sense of this word as related to salvation?—The answer is readily reached. Comprehensively stated, the points peculiar in their usage of the term "law" were threefold:—(1) They put more into that term than the Lord wrote on the two tables of Sinai; they gave it a broader application than the moral law of the ten commandments—comprehended more under it than Paul did when he said (Rom. 13: 8-10), "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law;" "love is the fulfilling of the law." These epistles to Rome and Galatia show plainly that those Jews held circumcision to be of entirely vital consequence. When they spake of "law," therefore, as comprehending what men must do to be saved, circumcision was in it.—Moreover, with circumcision, there went also into their sense of law a somewhat indefinite yet very considerable amount of ritual observances; *e. g.* the observance of sacred seasons; of rites of purification; sacrifices, *etc., etc.* The Pharisee whose prayer in the temple (Luke 18: 11, 12), recites the good things which were to commend him to the Lord's special favor, said—"I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess." Our Lord describes the Pharisees (Mat. 23: 23), as paying tithes most punctiliously of "mint, anise and cummin," and as horrified at those who failed to wash their hands before dinner. (Mark 7: 2-5, and Luke 11: 38.) These incidental touches may suffice to indicate how things very small in themselves are magnified in their notion to a vast and even vital importance as related to acceptance before God.

(2.) Obedience to law in their sense of it was held to be *the ground of their justification*. In their view they were to seek salvation by obedience to this law and had the promise of finding it by and under this law alone. It was in this point of light that Paul continually puts *law* over against *faith*. Law, in their sense and view of it, was *a way of salvation*, as really as in Paul's system, faith in Christ was the condition of being saved. The two sys-

tems, considered as supplying conditions of salvation, were not only distinct but antagonistic ; either one supplanted the other. There could be no blending of the two together. If a man was to be saved by obeying law in the Jewish sense of it, he had no Christ, wanted no Christ, but went into heaven because he had kept the law. Every Jew, converted from this notion of being saved by works of law to the opposite system—salvation through faith in Christ—must therefore absolutely *die* to his old system, and it must become utterly dead, defunct, powerless, as to him. In his thought, in his hope and reliance, law must be abjured, and faith in Christ must take its place—*i. e.*, *considered as his ground of reliance* for pardon, salvation, heaven. But this by no means implied that he held himself free from obligation to obey the moral law.

(3.) A third element in the Jewish conception of law (really though perhaps not broadly distinguishable from the last named) lies in its supposed motive power against sin ; or in other words, its effective agencies for sanctification. It is plain that the Pharisaic Jew relied upon law in his sense of it to do for him morally and spiritually, what the gospel system provides for in its revelations of Christ, especially as made vividly clear and tenderly impressive through the Holy Spirit. In debating this point Paul maintained that mere law, though in itself “holy and just and good,” became death to him because it aroused his combativeness—the pressure of authority upon an unhumbed, unsubdued spirit, provoked resistance and worse rebellion (Rom. 7 : 8-13). Over against this, under the light and glory of a Saviour’s dying love shed abroad in the soul by the revealing Spirit (2 Cor. 3 : 18), men are “changed into the same image”; sin becomes inexpressibly loathsome; holiness altogether lovely.

Here then is yet another element, not only present but active in the Jewish conception of law—an element against which Paul earnestly contended. To law so considered, men must become dead ;—*i. e.* must no longer rely upon the influence of mere law as a motive power for subduing sin and implanting the spirit of a loving obedience.

This point is liable to be overlooked. We shall fail to take in the whole of the Pharisaic character if we leave out or even under-estimate his claim to a pre-eminent sanctity. Let the reader recall the Pharisee in his devotions at

the temple as delineated by our Lord : "I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (Luke 18: 11). Or as not less in point, Paul's own testimony as to his Pharisaic life—"Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. 3 : 6). Similar testimony may be found in the appendix to Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth—*e. g.* of one Eliezer the Great (p. 523) who shortly before his death asked—"What precept of the law is there which I have not obeyed"? Also (p. 556) of Kedah, son of Elai, currently known as "Judah the sinless," said to have continued sinless through his whole life." Of course this sinlessness was in their view attained under mere law.

I have now endeavored to show that at the date of these epistles of Paul, the Pharisaic and mainly the Jewish conception of law had three peculiar elements which should be taken into account in our exposition of the passage in question—*viz.* (1.) It comprehended more than the ten commandments proclaimed from Sinai :—(2.) Obedience to it was held to be the ground of justification before God :—(3.) It was assumed to have within itself all needful motive power to produce holiness,—all the influences requisite for sanctification.

Bearing these points distinctly in mind we are prepared to reach an exposition of the passages in question at once satisfactory and safe. The key is in the fact that Paul speaks of "law" *in the Jewish sense of it*. He remembers his own experience under those views down to the hour of his conversion. He perfectly understands how his readers in Rome and Galatia think of "law"; and therefore *he speaks to those views*. Is it strange then that Paul should write to converts from Judaism there—"Ye are not under the law, but under grace;" or this—"Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;" delivered from the law, having died to that under which we were held" (the better translation of Rom. 7: 6)?

Of the "law" as enlarged from that of Sinai, but especially considered as both the ground of justification and the requisite power unto holiness of life, how could he say less than this? Was there not a most urgent demand that he should say all this, as he might hope and would aim to bring them off from reliances that could be only ruinous, and unto a faith in Christ which alone could save?

Writing to the Galatians, Paul seems to make one point which if not new, is at least made specially prominent, *viz.*, that the law itself helped him to renounce the law as his trust for justification and for the holiness acceptable to God:—"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." (Gal. 2: 19). "Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, etc. (Gal 3: 23, 24). The work of the law as schoolmaster may have been manifold, and not confined to any one point; for it might quicken the conscience, might impress a sense of sin; might reveal its own utter powerlessness to sanctify, and might destroy all hope of justification on the score of perfect obedience.

And yet further, it might be a schoolmaster, leading the thought and the heart of the people toward Christ by means of its typical foreshadowings of the Great Atoning Sufferer toward whom all sacrifice pointed, and in whom only it had its proper realization.

Hence the expositor's difficulty here is not so much to find ways enough in which the schoolmaster might bring his pupils to Christ, as to determine which out of many was most prominent before the Apostle's mind.

Yet further and finally, that Paul should exhort his Jewish converts to "stand fast in the liberty attained through Christ and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage"—bondage to the rituals of the Mosaic system—has its ready explanation; for was not Pharisaism a horrible yoke of bondage, and no less pernicious than heavy and galling? It seems to be evermore the genius of ritualism to enforce with emphatic stress the points which are specially valueless, and according as they are so, and thus to dwarf piety, if perchance there be any, but worst of all, to locate piety where it is not, and so to raise personal hopes of salvation which God will by no means fulfil.

It will now be seen (let us hope), that we can give these passages an adequate and satisfactory exposition without in the least abating from the present authority and obligation of the moral law of Sinai, and hence, without at all fostering the abuses of Antinomianism. If on superficial thought these passages may seem to sound like an abrogation of the law of Sinai, it is only because the thought is

superficial, satisfying itself with the sound, and stopping short of the real sense. For if we were Jews, holding the sentiment prevalent among Paul's readers in Rome or Galatia, and being held in bondage by such sentiments, we could not easily misunderstand these words of Paul. There would be scarcely the least imaginable danger that we should misconceive his meaning. But inasmuch as we are not Jews, and have never associated under the term "*law*" that group of ideas and those shades of thought which made up Pharisaism in the gospel age, we are in real danger of misconceiving Paul's doctrine. The case illustrates the supreme importance, toward a correct interpretation of scriptural terms, of studying them in the light of their historic use in the age of the original writer and of the readers for whom he specially wrote. There can be no worse blunder than to take the words of Scripture in the sense current now, when this sense differs from the sense current then. We *must* go back to the age when these were living words, and when the thoughts they represent were the living thoughts of men.

Applying to the scriptures judiciously these principles of interpretation, we learn not only what they *may* mean but what they *must*. We may arrive at a reasonable degree of certainty. Disregarding these principles, no certainty can ever be attained. To fall back upon our own impressions or intuitions is to substitute our own mind in place of God's mind as the ultimate fountain of truth. If we seek truth through written words inspired of God, then what Paul meant to say and God meant he should say is the truth we seek—nothing less or more than this and nothing other. Hence if a revelation of God's thought in written words be of supreme, priceless value, the just interpretation of those words must be supremely important—and have a value above all price.

Recurring again to the practical application of the truths supposed to lie in our passage, or really there, let us note that Christianity has often been sorely afflicted by the evils arising from their misconception and abuse. It is a sore evil that Christian minds should be perplexed over their relations to the moral law under the gospel scheme. It is an evil yet more terrible that they should be positively misguided and their views really perverted. We sometimes hear or read remarks upon "the bondage

of a legal spirit," which are sadly wanting in discrimination and are badly liable to mislead. If there be any good meaning in these words, what may it be? Is it thought important to the best Christian life to deify the moral law of God and to teach that love is higher and better than law and therefore that obedience to law belongs to a lower grade of piety, but the impulses of love to a higher? * Let the Christian who seeks the truth on these points ask himself whether there is any ground for this assumed antagonism between law and love? Apply to it what Paul himself has said of law; "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." For example—"Thou shalt not commit adultery"—for it violates the law of love to your fellow-beings. "'Thou shalt not steal"—for this offends against love *etc.*—and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." A greater than Paul had already said essentially the same thing as to the relations of the law to love and of love to the law—even He under whose shaping hand the grand elements of all law crystallized into those "two great commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets"—the first and greatest one being—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind;" "the second like unto it;" "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mat. 22: 36-40).—Is there even the least ground here for assuming an antagonism between love and law?

Nay verily. Can any words assume more absolutely that they are essentially and in spirit *identical*—so much so that law is obeyed only in love; that love and only love can truly meet the demands of law; and that law never goes beyond love—*i. e.* never requires anything more or other than love requires. Law is of use to define the proper channel for the outgoings of love toward God and toward

* It would be uncharitable, in my view untrue, to say that all the avowed advocates of the so-called "Higher Christian life," drift toward Antinomianism; but it may be said safely that the open profession of living a sinless life has to a certain degree a natural tendency toward displacing or at least depreciating the moral law as the rule of Christian duty. Hence there is a heightened demand in our times for the most thorough discussion of the points made in the present Essay.

our neighbor ; it were supreme folly to decry the value of law as fulfilling this function.

Is it said that love makes its own law and that its impulses are a law unto themselves ? I am well aware that this is virtually said—but none too wisely. The real demand made by this saying is for a licence that sets law at nought. It proposes to say to the Almighty Ruler—We need no direction, and propose to accept none as to the special duties or services toward God or man which the law of love requires under all the varying circumstances of our earthly life. The impulses of our own heart's love will guide us wisely enough, and any restraint upon their freedom we propose to repel ! Let love be *free* ! Take from it the element of freedom and what of moral value remains ?

Such reasoning, in such a spirit (I suggest) assumes to be wiser than God, and holds up a sort of virtue which has no divine warrant. Who knows that God will or can accept the self-directed impulses of such love as a substitute for that love which is the fulfilling of his law ?

No fundamental discussion of this point—the essential nature of that love which in its origin and its professed law of direction is simply *impulse*—can stop short of the domain of metaphysics. The limits of this essay will allow only the briefest allusion to the metaphysical character of such impulse, yet enough to say that it is emotion, not choice ; that it has in it no more virtue as it exists in man than it has in a kitten or a robin red-breast ; that it is neither intelligent nor voluntary, and therefore fundamentally lacks the elements of true virtue or holiness. In man, as also in all the lower animals, it comes under a law of instinct which our Maker has implanted in our constitution for the ultimate purpose of making existence possible—to perpetuate the race and secure a certain measure of good to this existence. Into the far higher realm of intelligent, voluntary service for other's good, it never enters. Of personal conscious, voluntary homage and obedience to the will of God, it knows nothing. It is therefore an outrage upon the human intelligence to foist mere impulse that lacks moral character into the place of the voluntary, intelligent love which manifests itself in purposed obedience to the will of God.

Recurring again to the main drift of our discussion—

Let it be granted that law conceived of in the Pharisaic sense and law applied for Pharisaic purposes, deserves to be decried, and should by all means give place to love—or rather let us say—should give place to the law of Sinai as interpreted by Paul himself, and by his and our Great Master, Jesus Christ.

If a “legal spirit” means (as these words should mean) the spirit of obedience to law, let it reign in all hearts. Jesus has said—“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me,” (Jn. 14 : 15, 21.) Obedience is the test of love. A love that reigns not unto obedience—that fails to beget obedience to the known will of the Master—is certainly spurious. It may be emotional, sensational, or even extatic; but it can never satisfy the law of Christ as expounded by himself. It is simply a fallacy to glorify it by the name love.

No words can express too strongly the value of the moral law given from Sinai and the importance of holding it in its full, unabated force under the gospel system as enjoining love supreme towards God and love equal and impartial towards fellow men. Let it evermore be held to prove the sincerity of our heart-homage toward God; let it be the crucial test of that true faith in Christ which he has made the condition of salvation. Let it therefore be maintained forever that the moral law, first given from Sinai—then interpreted, endorsed, re-affirmed by the Son of God—stands in unabated force under the gospel scheme—with force indeed augmented and heightened by the superadded claims that come upon us from the life and from the death of the incarnate Son.

Yet again: If the moral law still stands in undiminished force, it must be a first Christian duty to cultivate *conscientiousness* as to a just apprehension of its meaning and of its bearing upon ourselves, and as to our own personal obedience to its claims. It should be our supreme endeavor to learn what it enjoins and what it forbids. We must needs *know* before we *obey*. And the spirit of obedience will manifest itself in a most careful and honest enquiry for its real meaning and for its actual application to ourselves under all the present circumstances of every day life. *The conscientious spirit is itself obedience.* The honest endeavor to ascertain what God’s law requires of

you this day, and in the very circumstances of this day's activities, will please him and be accepted before him. There is not the least imaginable danger that this sort of "legal spirit" will bring you under any "bondage" which you need to fear or avoid. Its "bondage" is nothing worse, nothing other, than the sweet constraint of love.

Deep in your heart you are glad that you have the opportunity to express your love and your gratitude to Him who died for you, by diligently studying his commands, and by most persistent endeavor to obey them. And if conscious mistakes as to knowledge of duty and conscious short-comings in its performance combine to oppress the heart, it may still be a precious consolation if we can look humbly up to the Master and say—"I have sought to know and labored to do thy will."—And if at any time his Spirit beareth witness to our spirit that it is even so, we have reached one of the best experiences of the Christian life. No extacies of hope as to the glorious future are to be named in comparison with this.—Thus the law of God, legitimately and honestly used, works itself into the staple elements of true piety. But if dubiously or dimly apprehended, the mind being dark or confused as to the legitimate sphere and function of the moral law, the effect can scarcely fail to be damaging if not even disastrous upon the growth and joy of your christian life. Much more must the result be disastrous if it rule out the sense of obligation to this law by assuming that its claims on us are abrogated under the gospel. There is no limit to the mischiefs that have come and naturally must come from antinomianism.

Finally, with the above exposition before the mind, we readily see that all Paul's words to the Romans or Galatians respecting "works of law" and "works of righteousness" as related to the salvation of men must be interpreted under the light of *their* usage of these terms and phrases. Taking law in their sense of it and thinking of "works of law" or "of righteousness" as the ground of justification, or as the motive power toward holiness of heart and life, it is easy to see that there is great and vital truth in every word Paul has said; and also that there is never the least antagonism between his doctrine and that of his brother apostle, James. For James thought of God's law as the rule of life toward fellowmen. So thought of,

Paul would endorse James in every word. And if James had found or taken occasion to combat the errors of Pharaonic Jews, he would have endorsed unqualifiedly every word of his brother Paul. Their supposed discrepancy, therefore, is no real discrepancy whatever.

APPENDIX B.

ONE RESURRECTION OR TWO?

Do the Scriptures teach the doctrine of two resurrections, a first and a second; or only one, strictly universal, of both the righteous and the wicked?

1. On this question the standard authority is from the lips of Jesus himself (John 5: 28, 29); “The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his [Christ’s] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

The reader will notice that this statement is entirely explicit. Here are the two well defined classes—“they that have done good,” and “they that have done evil;” and these two comprise the whole human race. Of the one class it is declared that they come forth from their graves to “the resurrection of life,” blessednesss: of the other, in like manner, that they shall come forth to “the resurrection which is unto damnation.” Of both it is declared that “*the hour is coming*”—some one hour, not two, nor many, but the one hour in which *all*—not a part, but *all* that are in their graves—which must of necessity include both saints and sinners. No fair construction of this passage can make it consistent with the theory of two distinct resurrections at hours far remote from each other. If Jesus had designed to teach the doctrine of two resurrections, one for the righteous and another for the wicked, he must have made a very different statement from this.

Again, in full harmony with these words of our Lord is Paul’s confession of his faith in the resurrection, made before Felix, and recorded (Acts 24: 15); “And have hope toward God (which they themselves also allow) that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just

and of the unjust." This, it will be noticed, is not only Paul's own belief but that of the Jews also—"which they themselves also allow"—[accept].

Christ taught the doctrine of the final judgment very explicitly and circumstantially in Mat. 25: 31-46—and in a way which indirectly proves because it irresistibly assumes one general resurrection as against two—one including both the righteous and the wicked, and not two, at periods remote from each other, one for the righteous and another for the wicked. For there are gathered, before the one great throne, all nations, and he separates them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. They all take their own place—one class at the right hand, and the other at the left. As certainly as the righteous and the wicked are both and all here, so certainly must they have been previously raised from their graves; for the doctrine of scripture every where is that the final resurrection immediately precedes the final judgment.

Yet again, John (Rev. 20: 12, 13) most decidedly assumes one general, universal resurrection, in the words—"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in them, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works."—That this includes *all the dead* is made very definite by the statement—"small and great," and by the further declaration—"The sea gave up the dead which were in it:"—the realms of the dead, and the personified Ruler of those realms, surrendered all, good and bad who had gone thither at the summons of death.—That the righteous are here as well as the wicked is made certain by the opening of the book of life which John noticed very particularly. Those whose names and deeds were there are embraced in this universal resurrection and judgment.

Thus it will be seen that the testimony of the scriptures to the point of one general resurrection and not two, lacks no element of clearness, definiteness, explicitness, nor of inspired authority. If the word of Jesus himself is good authority, then is the authority for one general resurrection as against two, entirely decisive.

2. It will be objected that the scriptures teach very definitely and positively that “the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thess. 4: 16); and also that there is a “first resurrection” for a certain class well defined by the Reve-lator John, and distinguished from “the rest of the dead” (Rev. 20: 4-6).

It is proper that these objections should be carefully examined.

As to the passage from Paul to the Thessalonians;—“The dead in Christ shall rise first;” its bearing on this question is only apparent, not real; for it has not the slightest reference to a first resurrection as related to a second. Paul says nothing here of a first resurrection before a second resurrection, *i. e.* of the righteous before the wicked, or even of a part of the righteous before a certain other part of them;—nothing of the sort. He speaks of the dead in Christ as rising *first*, only in the sense of rising *before* the saints then living and remaining [on earth] shall ascend, so that all will ascend together. The great point he would affirm in this passage is that saints previously dead will be at no disadvantage compared with those who shall be living on the earth at the final coming of the Lord. The brethren in that church had been sorrowing unreasonably over their departed friends as being at great disadvantage compared with those who should be yet living when Christ should come. This misapprehension of theirs it was Paul’s definite and sole purpose to correct.—This “rising first,” therefore, has not the least conceivable bearing upon a first resurrection as related to a second. It is only a resurrection “first” as being *before* the ascension of those then living.

It will be said that John (Rev. 20: 4-6) does certainly speak of “the first resurrection;” that he locates it *in time* at the opening of the Millennium; and as to the persons raised, he makes them the martyrs who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus.

This case of a “first resurrection” should be carefully considered.*

* In my volume on the Revelation of John this passage received attention in its place. Many of the points of argument adduced there will reappear here; and perhaps some others may be added, or put in stronger and better light.

As to the sense of this “first resurrection,” I maintain that it is a resurrection, *not of bodies but of souls*.

1. Because John says so. He tells us distinctly *what he saw*; and we must certainly assume that this is *all* that he saw. “I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they liyed and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not [the better text is precisely this—[“lived not”—with nothing for “again”]—*lived* not in this special sense of the word “live,” until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.” (Rev. 20 : 4, 5).

Let it be noted that in the final resurrection, described in this very chapter (v. 11–14), John saw *bodies* because they were to be seen. That was a resurrection of bodies. “I saw the dead small and great”—*i. e.* young and old—of every age. For “the sea gave up the dead which were in it”—*i. e.* the dead bodies—“and Death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them”—this also being the dead bodies.—All this shows that in this pictorial vision, John saw things as in a great panoramic scene where objects were drawn pictorially to the life. When the resurrection was that of bodies, he saw the bodies as they were to be: when the resurrection was only that of souls, he saw it as it was. If the bodies of these martyrs were to rise then as well as their souls, John would have seen them. Bodies, as compared with souls are very visible things, palpably visible and unmistakable.—I must insist upon this fundamental law of exegesis, *viz.* interpret John according to what he said, and not according to what he did not say. We are to assume that he told us correctly what he *saw* in vision and that he saw objects as they *were to be* in fact, when his vision should be fulfilled. It is not our responsibility to make John’s visions for him, nor to *suppose* that he must have meant something different from what he said. Our responsibility begins and ends with fairly interpreting what he wrote as to the things he saw.

2. Beyond question these souls are the same which he saw under the altar (as in chapter 6 : 9–11), on the opening of the fifth seal. Note what he says of them there.

“I saw under the altar the souls of them that were

slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held ; and they cried with a loud voice, saying ; “ How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? ” Observe, the general description is the same there as here ; in each case, of martyrs “ slain for the word of God and for the witness or testimony which they bore.” In each case he saw *souls*, precisely *souls*—not bodies.—*There*, under the altar, they were crying unto God to avenge their blood, and his own bleeding cause : *here* God has done it, and they are jubilant. *There* they were lifting up their imploring cry as if the burden of Christ’s falling kingdom were crushing down their hearts. *Here* nothing could show more impressively that God had heard their cry—had fought and conquered the old Persecutor of the saints, and bound him with his great chain.—Then comes in this new scene—the old praying martyrs, lifted up from under the altar and set on thrones, and judgment given them. This was real *life* from the dead—a resurrection according to its true symbolic sense.

As confirming the interpretation here given, let me say briefly, that it is entirely in harmony with the spirit and scope of this entire book of Revelation. This book has precisely one supreme purpose and but one—that is, to sustain the faith of a persecuted church ; to give moral strength to bleeding martyrs ; to tone up the moral courage of suffering, imperilled men and women to face the stake or the executioner’s ax, because victory will turn on Zion’s side and martyrs will have their reward in pre-eminent glory at the end. This purpose reigns throughout this book, boldly prominent in every scene. The case of these martyred souls, seen first under the altar ; seen last raised to thrones—should be interpreted in harmony with the spirit of the entire book.

The rest of the dead lived not—until after these thousand years. “ The first resurrection then, whatever its nature may have been—whether of bodies, or of souls only, most certainly included only those martyrs whom he first saw under the altar, and here saw again, jubilant as with a new life because their prayer had been heard. It must be a bold and violent stretching of this passage to make it teach the resurrection of all the righteous who shall have lived and died before the Millennium begins. Certainly John said no

such thing ; what right then have we to say it and claim his authority for it—forcing upon his words a sense they cannot bear and which therefore he never put into them ?

3. It is entirely natural that John should think of a first and a second resurrection in the very same sense of each which he had in his first lesson upon the resurrection given him by his Great Master. That lesson impressed his mind so deeply that he retained it for life and gave it a place in his gospel history (5 : 24-26, 27-29)—thus : “He that heareth my word and believed on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but *is passed from death unto life.*”—“Verily, verily, I say unto you ; the hour is coming and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live.”—This the reader will see, is a resurrection—a passing from death unto life, which is precisely a *resurrection*—in its nature, nothing more—nothing less. The dead hear the voice of the Son of God ; and hearing it, they live. This is a resurrection. The hour for such resurrections “*now is.*” That is to say, this resurrection is the passing from spiritual death to spiritual life. Resurrection is here a figure of speech for this wonderful transformation from death to life.—And the reader should not fail to note that this is the *first* resurrection. The second is brought to our view immediately (vs. 28, 29) ;—“Marvel not at this [that the voice of the Son of God through his Spirit is so mighty in the new birth of dead souls into life]—“for the hour is coming [not “*now is,*” but simply “*is coming*”] in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.” This is the *second* resurrection. The first was spiritual, figurative : the second is literal. As the first was of souls raised to a new soul-life ; so this second is of bodies, raised to bodily resurrection—“this mortal putting on immortality.”—How could John ever forget this striking antithesis between the first resurrection which is spiritual, and the second which is literal ;—the first, of souls only, and the second of bodies ? Is it strange that the very same conception of a first and of a second resurrection should reappear in his Apocalypse ? It would have been far more strange if it *had not* reappeared here.

4. An argument of the same general character lies in these facts *viz.* (a) That John borrows his symbols and figures almost exclusively from the Old Testament prophets. You may go through this entire apocalypse and scarcely find one symbol, figure, type, the roots of which and mostly the identical form do not appear in the Old Prophets.—(b) Couple with this first fact, a second—*viz.* That the Old Testament Prophets made the resurrection a figure or symbol of *national resurrection to life*. Most if not all the distinct cases of reference to the idea of resurrection are of this sort—a symbolic use to signify the raising of a nation from figurative death to life. The clearest cases are Isa. 26 : and Ezek 37 :

Isaiah (26 : 14, 19) declares of God's enemies [with special reference to Babylon] “They are dead ; they shall not live again ; they are deceased ; they shall rise ; because thou hast visited and destroyed them and made every memorial of them to perish.”—But of Zion—God's covenant people—he says ;—[as in the Auth. version]. “Thy dead men shall live : together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth her dead.”—An improved translation, slightly expanded by paraphrase, will better present the full sense.—“Thy dead, O Zion, shall live again ; being my dead body, they shall rise again. Awake and sing, ye that lie buried in dust ; awake, come forth from your [figurative] graves ; for the dew that fell on thy dead body was as the dew of heaven on withering vegetation, vivifying, restoring to new life. Therefore the earth shall give up her dead.”—Or the last clause may take this turn :—And on the earth, on the dead strown there, thou wilt make this dew of life to fall. On the general interpretation of these resurrections, there cannot be the least doubt. God's captive people (Zion) in Babylon are nationally dead : his Spirit breathes new life into them and they rise to a new and spiritually, far more vigorous, life. It is the idea of a resurrection put to service to indicate the resuscitation of the Lord's Zion, returning from her seventy years' captivity.

Ezek. 37 : 1-14 is so entirely clear that more explanation may seem superfluous. The dry bones of the dead Israel lie bleaching in the valley ; can they ever live again? The Lord declares that they can and that they shall. His

own explanation of this symbol is at once brief and decisive :—“ These bones are the whole house of Israel.” Thus saith the Lord ;—“ Behold, O my people, I will *open your graves*, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.”—This is the use made by the old prophets of the idea of resurrection.

These prophets were classic authorities to John. Their figures and symbols filled and fired his imagination—lived and glowed in his impassioned thought. It was therefore by a first law of the human mind that they should reappear in his own visions. We are bound to expect that the Old Testament usage of the idea of resurrection will control his conceptions, his visions, his language. It is therefore at the bhest of the strongest and best laws of interpretation that we construe John’s first resurrection in harmony with that sense of resurrection which obtains in the Old Prophets.

5. It may not be amiss to notice that John does not speak of a second resurrection *by name*. He does not say —“ *This* is the first resurrection :” and then, by and by, coming to the final one, say—*This* is the *second*. If he had put the first and the second in this way of distinct antithesis—one over against the other, under the same word, there would be some force in the argument [much more than there is now] that the first must be of the same sort as the second. But he carefully abstains from putting the second in this close antithesis with the first. He has occasion to speak of what is a second resurrection ; but he does not put it in this same phrase. He only says :—“ I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; ” “ the sea gave up the dead that were in them ” etc. Thus [was it of design ?] he has left the way entirely open to explain the first resurrection as *not* of precisely the same sort as the second, but as being a resurrection of souls from grief and agony to joy and triumph ; while the second may be of bodies raised at the last day.

6. Akin to this consideration is yet another, *viz.* that the first resurrection is put in direct antithesis with “ the second death.” Here a “ first ” is compared and contrasted with a “ second.” The first is freighted with glory and triumph : the second is the consummation of unutterable loss, ruin, damnation. The contrast is fearful, terrible. Nothing could be more vivid, more appalling—the rising

to joy and bliss unspeakable, over against the “death that never dies.”

7. A word of exposition may be due upon the passage (v. 4); “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them.” I see no reason to doubt that these words follow (in sense) those of Christ to his disciples as in Mat. 19: 28, and in Luke 22: 30: “Ye that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” “I appoint unto you a kingdom. . . that ye may sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” No literal sense can be given to these passages, in consistency with the genius of the gospel scheme. Elevation to high honor and responsibility in his kingdom, is the sentiment here. The conception fits well to the sentiment in our passage.

The exposition of this passage (Rev. 20:) has peculiar and very special importance because of its fundamental relation to the doctrine of Christ’s Pre-millennial Advent. The two points in this scheme, more vital than any and all others, are

(1.) That Christ is to come in person—visibly, bodily from heaven to reign visibly on the earth—this “coming” to be at the beginning [not after the end] of the Millennium;

(2.) That at his coming, the first resurrection will bring forth from their graves the righteous dead to reign with him on this earth one thousand years.

Now it so happens that by reason of a remarkable series of misconceptions and misinterpretations, and largely by putting into the passage what the inspired writer never put there, these supposed corner stones of this system of doctrine *are not there*; they do not lie under the edifice at all.—For in the first place, there is not a word in the passage about the visible coming of Christ at this point of time—the beginning of the Millennium. John saw several other things occurring at this point of time; but not this;—many other things of comparatively insignificant importance; but this greatest possible spectacle, grand and awful enough to throw every thing else into darkness (if it really took place then and there), he did not see. For it is not even supposable that he saw it, yet did not think it of sufficient importance to speak of it. It is simply impossible

that Christ's Second Advent should lie precisely here in time—the great, towering, all overshadowing event of the hour, and yet not be in John's vision, and be in it too more distinct, more impressive, more vast to the eye than anything else, or indeed than all things else combined. Therefore it is no exaggeration to say that the first corner-stone of this system is not there, in its needed and legitimate place.

Nor is the system at all more fortunate as to the position of its second great pillar doctrine—[or corner-stone] *viz*, *the resurrection of the righteous dead* at this precise moment, *i. e.* at the beginning of the Millennium. For the first resurrection which John saw at this time and described was not a resurrection of *all* the righteous dead, but only of certain martyrs, then recently fallen when he was writing—for in their prayer as he recorded it, they say—“Avenge our blood on those now dwelling on the earth” (6: 10). These are the very words of their prayer [the present participle—now dwelling], which shows conclusively that the number of these martyrs was very small.—By what sort of right *all* the righteous dead are authorized to put their names into this list, or by what right any interpreter of scripture assumes to put them there, are very pertinent enquiries.

Yet another mistake has been made in adjusting this corner-stone to the edifice it has been assumed to support, *viz*, that this resurrection is shown by John's own statements to have been of souls, not of bodies;—and this fact, as we have seen, is sustained by all those considerations which legitimately determine the true interpretation of John's symbols. Thus in both these vital respects, this great pillar doctrine of the system is entirely out of place, as a corner-stone. It does not underlie the edifice. You look where it should be—and it is not there.

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